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THE  
WESTMINSTER NEW TESTAMENT.

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*THE WESTMINSTER NEW TESTAMENT*

THESSALONIANS AND  
CORINTHIANS







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*THE WESTMINSTER NEW TESTAMENT*

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THESSALONIANS  
AND CORINTHIANS

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

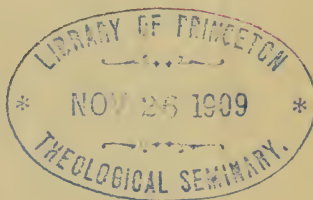
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NEW YORK  
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY  
LONDON  
ANDREW MELROSE





## PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

HAVING carefully selected the editors of the ten volumes of which the Westminster New Testament will consist, and having fully explained to them the purpose of the series, the General Editor is leaving them the greatest possible liberty; and the editor of each volume is alone responsible for the opinions expressed in it. It is hoped that thus any lack of uniformity will be amply compensated for by the varied interest which the free expression of his own individuality by each editor will impart to the series. While the standpoint adopted is that of modern critical scholarship, only the generally accepted results, and not the vagaries of individual critics, are being presented, and in such a fashion as to avoid unnecessarily giving any offence or causing any difficulty to the reverent Bible student. As the series is intended especially for teachers, lay preachers, and others engaged in Christian work, their needs are being kept particularly in view, and the Commentary aims at being as practically useful as possible. A new arrangement in printing the text and the notes has been adopted, which it is believed will be found an improvement.

A. E. GARVIE.

NEW COLLEGE, LONDON.

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## NOTE

EVERY worker on the New Testament must rest under great obligations to his predecessors ; and the present writer owes not a little to those who have recently gone before him in the twofold task of popular treatment and scholarly precision, like Dr. Adeney and Dr. Massie in this country, or, in another language and from a somewhat different theological standpoint, Pastor Lueken and Dr. Bousset. In trying to help the English reader to compare with advantage the Authorised Version, and its modern successor, something has been drawn from Prebendary Humphry's useful though too scanty *Commentary on the Revised Version*.

R. M.

# THE WESTMINSTER NEW TESTAMENT

## THESSALONIANS AND CORINTHIANS

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### INTRODUCTION.

#### THE EARLIEST PARTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE inscription on the cross of Christ was in three languages—Greek, Latin, and Hebrew (John xix. 20). By “Hebrew” we have here to understand a kindred speech—Aramaic, or Syriac—which had superseded Biblical Hebrew. One type of Aramaic was probably the mother tongue of Jesus, and of the earliest Christian Church ; we have scraps of it in Mark’s Gospel (v. 41, vii. 34, xv. 36) or John’s (xix. 13, 17), and in Paul’s epistles (Rom. viii. 15 ; Gal. iv. 6 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 22 ; comp. Acts xxii. 2). Possibly the composition of Gospels may have begun in that language ; but those Gospels which have come to us and have been incorporated in our N.T. are not translations ; whether they owe much or owe very little to Aramaic writings, they are themselves Greek books. Latin, again, the speech of the conquering Empire, is represented

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only by a few loan-words in the N.T. vocabulary, *e.g.* "centurion." At Rome itself the earliest Christian church spoke Greek, and Paul writes to it in that language. Thus, in the providence of God, Greek was appointed to be the medium of N.T. Scripture. It was an international language all round the Levant, and beyond that both Eastwards and Westwards. What French was a generation or two ago in Europe, that, and more than that, Greek was during the Apostolic age. Here again there had been a change. N.T. Greek is not the older classical speech, in any of its dialects, but something more mixed and more popular—the language of everyday life, represented in the wonderful Egyptian papyri recently brought to light. This language stood ready for Christian preachers and writers; and the translation of the O.T., known (because of a legend) as the "Septuagint" or LXX, had already begun to acclimatise Biblical ideas in the Greek tongue. It is noteworthy that St. Paul himself, that true Hebrew, usually, though not invariably, follows the wording of the Greek O.T. even when it differs from the Hebrew original.

If we look now at our N.T. Canon, we shall see that it includes different lesser collections. First are placed the Gospels, with another historical book as appendix to them—the Acts. Next come St. Paul's epistles, which in their turn comprise (in the usual order) two still smaller collections. For, to begin with, we have epistles to churches—the longest<sup>1</sup> first, then the next longest, and so on down to the shortest; and, secondly, we have letters to individuals (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon),

<sup>1</sup> Counting not chapters, of course, which are conventional, but words.

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similarly marshalled. Moreover, the Pauline epistles have their appendix. The Epistle to the Hebrews stands next them, because of a growing inclination to ascribe it to St. Paul; it does not stand where, by its length, it would rank as a Pauline epistle, because the recollection or perception that it was not Paul's had not quite disappeared when the Canon was consolidated. Next we have a group of non-Pauline epistles, conveniently, if with questionable accuracy, known as Catholic or General—in contrast to epistles addressed to single churches. And lastly, there is their appendix, or the appendix of the whole collection—the Apocalypse of John.<sup>1</sup> Where are we to look for the earliest writings? Not in the Gospels, as we have them; although most of their material must have come down, in tenacious Eastern memories, from the earliest times of all. Not in the canonical Apocalypse; it dates itself in the latter half—and probably very near the end—of the first century. It remains that we turn to the epistles. There are three candidates for priority among these—1 Thessalonians, Galatians, James. As Dr. Adeney remarks, it is unlikely that the author of James should have invented this new literary type, the Christian epistle; nor is it likely (we may add) that a Christian epistle with so very wide an address should have come first of all.<sup>2</sup> What, then, of Galatians? It *may* be older than Thessalonians, especially if it really was

<sup>1</sup> The reader should be warned that old MSS have different orders of the Gospels, and that foreign Bible versions (*e.g.* Luther's) place the later books often in what is to us an unfamiliar order.

<sup>2</sup> It is held by some that James is not an early N.T. book at all, but late.

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addressed to "South Galatian" churches; but there is nothing to compel us to place it so early, even on the South Galatian theory; and the affinities of the epistle with Romans and Corinthians point to a later date. Probably, therefore, 1 Thessalonians is the oldest N.T. writing, 2 Thessalonians following it shortly. Both of these belong to Paul's "Second Missionary Journey," during which the church at Thessalonica had been founded. 1 and 2 Corinthians, again, belong to the "Third Missionary Journey," and are addressed to another church founded during the Second Journey.—These "Journeys" are a useful framework for reference, though we need not suppose that St. Paul himself attached very much importance to the visits which he paid to the Syrian Antioch, or that he divided his life into sections at these points, as we do in speaking of the "Journeys."—Another thing we must set clearly before our minds. How many years of Paul's apostolic life had passed before he began to write epistles! or at least to write epistles which have come down to us.

One argument, could we accept it, would enable us to place 1 Thessalonians decisively before Galatians—A. Sabatier's theory of *development* in the thought of St. Paul. Theologically, of course, Galatians is much more rich and full than Thessalonians. There is no need to repel the theory of development upon any religious grounds. But facts are against it. A convinced, nay, a persecuting Jew could not suddenly become a convinced and devoted Christian without acquiring a theology along with his first acts of faith. Or, if that is too boldly said, he must have acquired the materials



for a theology; and in the blind days at Antioch (Acts ix. 9), or during the mysterious residence in "Arabia" (Gal. i. 17), very much must have cleared itself to his thoughts. Even the shorter period might suffice. There are times when the machinery of the mind races; there may have been hours when revelation came like flashes of lightning. Disbelieving in Jesus, Paul had persecuted Him as a blasphemer accursed by God; believing in Jesus, Paul adored Him as dying the death which God had cursed, but dying it *for us*. Hence also from the very first hour of Christian faith Paul was a man called and fitted "to preach God's Son among the Gentiles" (Gal. i. 16). If we are to infer anything from the simple, undogmatic character of 1 Thessalonians, it is not that Paul's doctrines were still undeveloped, but rather that he was too much at home in the truth to keep nervously uttering theological shibboleths at the wrong time. "Babes in Christ" (1 Cor. iii. 1) must be "fed with milk,"—comp. 1 Thess. ii. 7. Doubtless there was always more in the Apostle's thought than he could well put into words for his half-Christianised converts.

Perhaps we might conjecture a more special reason for the composition of 1 Thessalonians. Paul usually settled for long periods in the larger cities (Acts xviii. 11, xix. 10); but at Thessalonica—whatever the length of the ministry to *Gentiles*; Acts xvii. 2 characteristically dwells upon the brief ministry to *Jews*—the work was interrupted all too soon. He wished to go back, but "Satan hindered him" (1 Thess. ii. 18). He sent Timothy, however (iii. 2), and Timothy returned with good news (iii. 6). Still, all this was not enough: he must write! *If we could suppose* that 1 Thessa-

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lonians was the first long<sup>1</sup> and serious letter which Paul wrote to a church, must we not say that "Satan"—whatever his methods may have been—over-reached himself? A second visit by St. Paul to Thessalonica would have blessedly affected many lives, but must then have passed into the dimness of history: an epistle is with us still! And so "the word of the Lord endureth for ever." What a series of epistles—what an enrichment of the world's literature and the Church's scriptures—resulted from these satanic hindrances! if we may guess that Paul now first began to use larger canvases for his permanent records of Divine truth.

It does not happen that the epistles dealt with in this little volume show the most characteristic type of a Pauline letter. Galatians, Romans (above all), Colossians, Ephesians, have the well-marked line between the doctrinal portion and the practical. There is no such division in James or in 1 John, while Hebrews hastens to add corresponding practical exhortations as soon as each point of doctrine has been affirmed. There is just an approach to Paul's own characteristic type in 1 Thessalonians. But that epistle is very simple; it is missionary preaching reiterated, or it gives first lessons in faith; but it forms no system. 2 Thessalonians, again, is concerned with one single danger; while 1 Corinthians answers a string of questions, and 2 Corinthians is borne, one might almost say formlessly, upon a tide of wild and deep emotion.

Most of St. Paul's letters seem to have been written by the help of an amanuensis (see *e.g.*

<sup>1</sup> The lost epistle to Corinth need not have been long, and must have been written later than 1 Thessalonians. See 1 Cor. v. 9, and *infra*, p. 23.



Rom. xvi. 22). It is probable that the Apostle's eyesight gave him trouble, and that, when he himself wrote, it was in "big characters" (Gal. vi. 11, where, it may be, an autograph postscript begins. Or, less probably, the verse may be evidence that all Galatians was an autograph letter). 1 and 2 Thessalonians may have been dictated to Silas, more probably perhaps to Timothy, as the youngest of the three founders (1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1; comp. 2 Cor. i. 19); 1 Corinthians to Sosthenes (i. 1); 2 Corinthians—or its greater portion—to Timothy (i. 1); 2 Cor. x. 1–xiii. 10, with their peculiarly intimate details and redoubled heat of emotion, rather suggest Paul himself. The amanuensis must have been sorely taxed to keep in touch with that tongue and brain and heart of fire! Nor can it have been easy for St. Paul to strain his thought through the meshes of dictation.

### THESSALONICA, AND THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH THERE.

Thessalonica, now Saloniki, or in slightly more classical form Salonica, was and is an important place. In ancient days it was reached by a Roman road, the Via Egnatia; in modern times it is a considerable seaport and railway terminus, supposed to be coveted by the Austrians if the Turkish Empire should break up. It is described as having been founded by Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great. "Founding" does not necessarily mean that there were no earlier inhabitants on the spot; there was a town of Byzantium, close to where Constantinople now stands, before the days of the great Constantine;

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but the founder gave to his city its new and prosperous start. Thessalonica has no geographical connection with the province of Thessaly in the north of Greece proper; the name commemorates a sister of Alexander the Great: she may have been named from some victory over Thessalians. Salonica stands in what originally was called Thrace, but from N.T. days downwards has ranked as part of Macedonia. Round about it, if hardly within the publicity of its streets, those Macedonian horrors prevailed but yesterday, in which "Christian" wreaked vengeance upon "Christian"—Greek on Bulgarian and Bulgarian on Greek—doing the work of the Turkish tyrant for him. So far has the power of the gospel waned in those districts of Europe where it first took root.

In Acts xvii. St. Luke makes it plain that, at Thessalonica as everywhere, St. Paul began with the synagogue; and he tells us of the time spent in that service—three Sabbaths, or (as the word may also mean) three weeks. His narrative does not make equally plain, what we learn from 1 Thessalonians itself, that the gospel had much greater success when the Apostle turned to a Gentile audience. Still, St. Luke leaves room for the longer and more fruitful Gentile mission; and 1 Thess i. 9 shows us a church consisting predominantly of heathen converts. There is a further difficulty as to the messages from Thessalonica to St. Paul. Acts tells us that Paul and Silas were sent on quietly to Berea; that, on the Jews making trouble there, Paul was sent off to the sea, and reached Athens by water; that from Athens he sent for Silas and Timothy, but had moved on to Corinth before they joined him. In

## Thessalonians and Corinthians 9

1 Thess. iii. 1 we read that Paul had thought it best to be left *at Athens, alone*, in order that Timothy might go back to Thessalonica. It is possible that Timothy joined Paul at Athens with news of the Macedonian churches, and was immediately sent back to Thessalonica, finally rejoining Paul, along with Silas, at Corinth. More probably Timothy had been with St. Paul from the first, though St. Luke may have been unaware of this. Paul does not say that he chose to be *again* left alone, but simply "to be left alone." If the two accounts will not perfectly harmonise, we must give the preference to the almost contemporary evidence of the letter. But the difference is of no real importance whatever.

### I THESSALONIANS.

We know what this letter is—a message to a half-founded church, supplementing a visit by Timothy and guided by his report. There is no great doctrine to teach, no pressing danger to ward off; Paul simply reiterates gospel truth, and pours out the love of his heart—happy love, and yet, as genuine and deep love always must be, anxious love too. The converts were his "glory and joy" (ii. 20; compare a later utterance, Phil. iv. 1). The man who had "persecuted Jesus" had not wasted his time since he was "apprehended by Christ Jesus." He was to stand before the returning Judge and Saviour, not alone, but accompanied by these spiritual "children whom God had graciously given" him (Gen. xxxiii. 5; Heb. ii. 13)—those who had "believed through his word" (John xvii. 20).

Even thus early St. Paul finds it necessary to defend himself against suspicion of his motives. This may surprise us. It constituted one of the arguments relied on by F. C. Baur, the great Tübingen critic, for rejecting 1 Thessalonians as a spurious and later composition. Paul could not find occasion to defend himself thus, so early in his life! The later author, wearing the mask of St. Paul, had confused different epochs in his hero's life, and had written a letter meant to belong to early days and yet coloured by the atmosphere of later times! It does not seem necessary, in a little book like this, to dwell upon the external evidence in favour of the epistle.<sup>1</sup> No one questions that such attestation is strong. Do internal difficulties overbear it? That is the point urged by extremer critics. But even the radical school (apart from sceptics who deny everything) admit to-day that Baur was wrong in his doubts of 1 Thessalonians. It was Baur who was colour blind; he knew the Paul of controversy, and did not believe in any other moods—as if Paul had been a monomaniac! With great acuteness, Baur collected every difficulty and pressed it into his service. But, after he has said all, it remains plain that no one would invent an epistle like 1 Thessalonians—so simple, so graceful, so loving, so little occupied with doctrine, so unadapted for playing a part in any controversy.

The simple character of the epistle is reflected in the little outbursts of prayer which occur so often in it and in 2 Thessalonians (1 Thess. iii. 11–13, v. 23; 2 Thess. i. 11, 12, ii. 16, 17, iii. 5, iii. 16). The same outbursts are found in later epistles; e.g. Eph. iii.

<sup>1</sup> Marcion's Canon (*circa* 140 A.D.), Muratorian Canon, Irenæus (by name, c. 180), etc. etc.

14-21, or—with a difference—Rom. xi. 33-36. But, as controversy and doctrine claim more space, less room is left for such devotional utterances. Those who desire fixed forms of prayer will find, in these outbursts of St. Paul's, noble contributions to a Christian liturgy.

The enemies whom St. Paul has in mind are, for the present, chiefly unconverted Jews. In this point, the epistle and the history as given in Acts tally exactly. Jews stir up trouble in place after place; and we might almost say that, in this stage of St. Paul's thinking, they occupy the place of Antichrist.<sup>1</sup> Their dog-in-the-manger attitude—their fury not only when Jews are brought to Christ but when Gentiles are evangelised (1 Thess. ii. 16)—is described by Paul as indicating their final turning away from God and God's final rejection of them. This may prove an important clue when we come to discuss the interpretation of 2 Thessalonians. Later in St. Paul's career, the Jews who are Jews by creed as well as by race almost disappear from the Apostle's writings; but Judaising Christians manifest a similar enmity to the gospel. 2 Corinthians partly, Galatians most of all, Romans too, though more calmly, and even Philippians, all testify to this subsequent and more painful contest; at least, the "dogs," etc., of Phil. iii. 2 are more likely to be professedly Christian Jews who work against the free gospel than to be men of unchanged Jewish faith.

(iv. 1-8) Among the subjects in regard to which St. Paul is anxious is the maintenance of moral decency in the life of his converts. The topic is

<sup>1</sup> 1 John ii. 18, 22; 2 John 7 (only N.T. uses of the word).



painful, but we must not suppose this danger non-existent even for sheltered Christian lives to-day. High-minded writers, who break with the Christian faith, constantly begin to go wrong upon questions of sex morality, although nine-tenths of what is good in human society depends, under God, upon the family, and the family stands or falls with the virtue of purity. And the low-minded world still has a gross and degraded tone upon such matters. The author of *Mark Rutherford* has put his finger on this contrast between Puritanism and worldliness. "Impurity was not an excusable weakness in the society in which I lived; it was a sin, for which dreadful punishment was reserved." What must the tone have been in a heathen world? And what must have been the danger to Christian converts in a half-founded church, with an unspeakably gross society around them, and with Paganism in their own blood? (Vers. 9-12, brotherly love.)

(iv. 13-v. 11) A special point on which Paul has to instruct the Thessalonians is the place of death in the believer's history. All the early disciples, Paul not the least, looked for a speedy return of Jesus in glory. The converts St. Paul made received the call to "watch and be sober" (1 Thess. v. 6)—straining their eyes, as it were, to see in the east the dawn of the longed-for day of full redemption. Then he left them, and presently disease or accident or weight of years—not persecution, apparently—had its effect, and Christians died. This was not what the church had expected! Were their departed friends secret sinners? Had God called them away in judgment? St. Paul is not disposed to deny that such things may happen

## Thessalonians and Corinthians 13

in Christian churches,—see 1 Cor. xi. 30,—though he trusts (*ibid.* ver. 32) that, even when sending sickness and death among Christians, God acts not merely in judgment but in chastening, that He may save. But of the Thessalonians St. Paul is persuaded better things than that. So he is at pains to assure them that the dead in Christ are in no respect less happy than those who live to see the Advent. When Christ appears, He will destroy the power of death over His sleeping members; and they, with living believers, shall ascend to the clouds to meet the returning conqueror, and henceforth shall be ever “with the Lord.” Such fears of loss suffered by the Christian dead; such moral disappointment blending in the survivors’ minds with natural sorrow; such reassurances from St. Paul—all should help us to understand the intensity of early Christian hope and the strong excitement which accompanied it. In his own great way, St. Paul breathes the same atmosphere. After leaving the subject of bereavement, and exhorting anew to moral earnestness, he expresses his confidence that Thessalonian believers will be preserved in soul and body “blameless” (v. 23) till the Advent. If death does take place, at least it is not to result from sin. No; they will be found “blameless.” But he thinks by preference—for them, and for himself—of survival to that great day. 1 Cor. xv. 52 speaks similarly; but 2 Cor. v. 8 exhibits a change; there Paul expects and, with traces of a struggle, welcomes death. The last stage is found, outside our own group of epistles, in Phil. i. 20–25, where Paul positively longs for death, in order to be “with Christ,” yet prefers and expects to live, in order that he may still further serve Christ and Christ’s people.

Although the typical form of a Pauline letter is not exhibited in 1 Thessalonians, yet we have an anticipation of the later structure in the short list of moral precepts with which the letter closes (v. 12-27).

At Thessalonica we do not read of "bishops and deacons," nor at Corinth, though we read of these officials in Philippians and again in the Pastoral Epistles. Here, at Thessalonica, there are certain leading members (v. 12) who are chiefly responsible for teaching, for discipline, for administration. Probably their leadership is a direct supernatural gift (Rom. xii. 7, 8), though it is possible to argue that it may have included an official status, such as was afterwards named "bishopric" or "elder-ship." At Corinth, however, the leadership must have been informal (1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16), and this makes it probable that leadership was no less informal at Thessalonica. We have to get such facts into our minds before we can justly conceive of the primitive churches.

## II THESSALONIANS.

The authorship of this letter has been much more gravely doubted than that of 1 Thessalonians, though the external attestation is as strong, if not stronger.<sup>1</sup> We must speak as we go on of these doubts and their grounds; but the epistle presents itself to us—and we accept it—as very slightly later in date than 1 Thessalonians.

It grows directly out of 1 Thessalonians, if the interpretation of 2 Thess. ii. 2 which is given below

<sup>1</sup> Add: probable citations of 2 Thessalonians in Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians (*circa* 130 A.D.).



## Thessalonians and Corinthians 15

can be accepted. "Be not . . . troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by *epistle as from us*." It seems as if St. Paul's earlier epistle had not produced the effect, or conveyed the impressions, which he desired. He wished to comfort Christian mourners, while maintaining zeal and watchfulness in all the living. What his letter did, in some cases, was to excite persons unduly and lead them to neglect their business. He had warned them against such errors (1 Thess. iv. 11), but he has to repeat the warning in the second epistle (iii. 6-15) much more seriously. His vivid picture of Christ's return (1 Thess. iv. 15-17), and his strong exhortations to watchfulness (v. 1-11), had been misconstrued by some unstable minds. It is not every one who can say, like John Wesley, that, if he knew Christ were returning "to-day," he would spend the day just as it had been planned. For it is not true of every Christian that he passes each day consciously in the Master's presence and in devotion to His will. Some Thessalonians drew a bad inference. Christ close at hand! Christ just on the point of returning! Then we dare not lay the bricks, or ply the potter's wheel, or sweep the house; we must gather all the time for prayer and praise! So-and-so, who is less "spiritual," will give us a meal! Some one—we know not who—must have told Paul of this: he was probably still at Corinth, and it was an age of travel. Most mortifying of all would be the explanation offered: *They say* it is your own teaching! They say you wrote so to them! Conceivably, in the days of his early epistles, Paul kept no copy of his letters. Afterwards he may have sent out some epistles (e.g. perhaps Ephesians) in duplicate or in circular;

and very possibly, both as a business man and as an anxious Christian teacher, he may have formed the habit of preserving a copy of what he wrote. But 1 Thessalonians *may* have been his first serious epistle ; or again, misunderstanding of his meaning in it *may* have suggested fuller precautions. Anyhow, it might be the fact that he could not refer to his exact words.—I write that? Never! Well, master, they say they understood you in that sense.—St. Paul half conjectures that they have received a sham epistle, but uses guarded language in warning them against epistles “as from him” which conveyed the false impression that the Second Advent was literally begun (ii. 2). Similarly at the end of the letter he calls attention pointedly to his signature, as verifying genuine epistles (iii. 17). Baur and others have urged that Paul could not yet be in fear of forged letters. May not the above suggestion show us St. Paul quite half afraid of forgeries, and with reason?

The gist of 2 Thessalonians, then, lies in chapter ii., correcting a false impression (ver. 1), due to excited spiritual messages or to misunderstanding of St. Paul, regarding the Second Advent. Near, blessedly near, as Christian hope might legitimately place the Advent, there were other elements in the revealed picture which (says our second epistle) St. Paul had already indicated. These must first accomplish themselves. There are two great ways in which we may conceive of the future of the gospel—the evolutionary, and the dramatic. We may think of progress advancing from much to more, till God’s will is done perfectly—“as in heaven, so on earth.” Or we may reflect that the immense influences of Christ’s

## Thessalonians and Corinthians 17

gospel tell on the bad as well as on the good, though in different fashion, and stimulate enmity as well as friendship. The latter view is found in all apocalyptic books, Biblical or non-Biblical, and in apocalyptic passages like 2 Thess. ii. Such writings differ from the average modern Christian tone not only in looking for a speedy end of the world but in looking towards conflict — higher lights accompanied by darker shadows. Modern Christians may find it difficult or impossible to expect Christ's visible return immediately. Eighteen centuries of history have spoken their commentary on the revelation of God's purpose. An immediate end was not in the Divine plan ; why should we expect a sudden end to-day? But modern optimism may well linger upon the other element in apocalyptic doctrine. Christ's coming draws ever nearer to us, in inward spiritual power, whatever may be literally destined by God regarding Christ's visible appearance. But what of Antichrist? If goodness is more vigorous in our days than in the past, are there not also new and more terrible forms of evil? We may trust with all our hearts in God's promise of victory ; but He has nowhere promised to spare us trouble or danger, pain or loss.

The peculiar form in which St. Paul anticipated the development of the antichristian power is obscure. He refers to things already said by word of mouth. The first readers could fill out his hints ; we cannot. Perhaps too, as some commentators have conjectured, it might have been dangerous for him to speak explicitly. We learn from 1 Thessalonians that *unbelieving Jews* were the outstanding enemies of the gospel during this period of St. Paul's ministry ; God's wrath, he says, has

come upon them "to the uttermost" (1 Thess. ii. 16), a judgment very much softened in Rom. xi. (25-32). Where, then, can Paul look for the "man of lawlessness" but among the Jews? And if his teaching is to the effect that a great "falling away" (2 Thess. ii. 3) is sure to take place, what can that be but the explicit renunciation of God on the part of those non-Christian Jews who had set themselves to defy the Lord's Anointed and to silence His gospel? <sup>1</sup> If, moreover, the "restraining" influence was that of the Empire (ver. 6) and emperor (ver. 7), he might well confine himself to hints. This is a place of honour, strangely contrasted with the view taken of Rome in the Apocalypse of John. But to speak of the Empire ceasing! Would not that be almost high treason?

Of course such expectations were not literally fulfilled; nor, when Paul wrote Romans xi., could he any longer expect an exactly literal fulfilment of them. There is something wavering and provisional in the most exact of apocalyptic forecasts. A difficulty of another kind may suggest itself to our thoughts. If it was the duty of these early Christians to be ready, moment by moment, for the possible return of Christ, could it be right to draw out programmes of the future which made that return, if doubtless near, yet not *immediate*? This difficulty arises in all computation of "times

<sup>1</sup> The present writer has stated this view in an article in the *Expositor* for November 1906. Many have connected 2 Thess. ii. with the unbelieving Jews; no one, so far as the writer knows, has construed the "apostasy" as is now proposed. For the great personal leader in the Apostasy, the "Man of Lawlessness," see below in the notes on the passage.

## Thessalonians and Corinthians 19

and seasons." Even in a St. Paul, we seem to light upon it in the present passage. He gives the teaching which naturally, upon the lines of apocalyptic, meets the dangers occasioned by apocalyptic. Christ is near, but not yet just at the door! There are other promised signs of His approach—fore-runners who have not yet appeared. Go on working! Christ is near us, but He is not *absolutely* here yet! We turn, with feelings certainly of intellectual relief, to the exhortations of chap. iii. It is a Christian duty to serve God in daily life. Such service alone can fit us for standing before our Master. There is no question that *those* teachings retain in the fullest sense their authority and their value.

Critics of 2 Thessalonians have urged that apocalyptic calculations like these belong to a later point in the history of the Apostolic Church. That is quite unconvincing. The earliest Christian teaching was apocalyptic through and through. 1 Thessalonians, as well as 2 Thessalonians, is notably so. And if we have rightly divined the meaning of the expected "apostasy," this particular apocalyptic forecast must date from that early time when Paul and the unbelieving Jews were face to face as hostile champions. It has further been urged that 2 Thessalonians writes "Lord" for God the Father (ii. 13, iii. 3, 5 (?), 16), while Paul uses "Lord" habitually of Christ (*e.g.* Phil. ii. 11). Without making Timothy the real author or even the joint author of 2 Thessalonians, we might accept the suggestion that dictation was less close and that traces of the secretary's idiom show themselves—possibly in this instance. Or, apart from that, we all know how a phrase—perhaps quoted



to us, perhaps remembered—may lay hold of us one day and then disappear again from use.

It would be too much to say that modern Christianity is superior to primitive. Where is the “love of those young Christian days”? or their heroic “other-worldliness”? We have lost much, by pushing the hereafter farther from our thoughts. Yet if we can make the moral service of Jesus Christ count for more and more, the literal apocalyptic vision may safely count for less. We should only follow the progress of St. Paul’s own teaching if we dwelt upon the thought of entering Christ’s presence rather by the grave and gate of death, and if we dwelt most of all upon spiritual service, and communion, and conformity to His mind.

### CORINTH, AND THE FOUNDING OF ITS CHURCH.

The town of Corinth held a geographical position of commanding importance, upon what was anciently the most celebrated of all isthmuses, that connecting the Morea (“mulberry-leaf,” from its shape), or, as the ancients said, the “Isle of Pelops”—the Black *Isle* in Ross-shire is really, like Peloponnesus, a peninsula—with the Greek mainland. Among the celebrated games of ancient Greece (see 1 Cor. —ix. 24—and other epistles) were the “Isthmian” games, held near Corinth. The town “of the two seas,” as the Latin poet Horace calls it, had two ports—Cenchreæ to the east, which had a Christian church of its own and comes up for mention twice in the N.T. (Acts xviii. 18; Rom xvi. 1), and Lechæum to the west, at the head of the Gulf of Corinth; the N.T. does not happen to mention it.

## Thessalonians and Corinthians 21

To cut a canal through the isthmus was an obvious plan, and the ancients played with the idea; but it was left to our own days to carry it out, though apparently commercial success has not justified the enterprise. Above the town rose the noble citadel, the Acrocorinthus, loftier and more picturesque by nature than the Acropolis of Athens, if less glorified by the splendours of art. When the Greeks succumbed to the Roman power in 146 B.C., they had been led by a confederacy of cities known, from the province of Achaia north of the Gulf of Corinth, as the Achæan League. Hence the Romans named the whole conquered province Achaia, though "Greece" itself is a Latin name, Hellas being the native name, and the modern King of Greece being properly "King of the Hellenes." Paul, as usual, employs the Roman provincial nomenclature. Thus 2 Cor. viii. and ix. play off against each other "Macedonia" and "Achaia." One hundred years after the Roman conquest, the great Julius Cæsar refounded Corinth as a "colony," and therefore as a place of special privileges. It was this comparatively modern commercial city which Paul visited. The place had grown rapidly in wealth and luxury. Greek pillars had three recognised types of capital—the Doric, the Ionic, and the Corinthian. The last, with its use of foliage, was the most florid of the three. Matthew Arnold had these capitals in mind when he made fun of newspaper leading articles "in the Corinthian style." But more than that. A Corinthian life or a Corinthian woman was a synonym for vice. On the other hand, we have an innocent association in the little black grapes which the Greek Government has lately been adver-

tising with such zeal. "Currants" are the dried grapes of "Corinth"; the currants of our cottage gardens—black, red, white—being so named simply from their outward resemblance to the foreign fruit.

When Paul was driven from Thessalonica and then from Berea by Jewish spite, he visited Athens. The Book of Acts gives an interesting account of what befell him there (xvii. 16–34), but it can record no great victories for the gospel in the conceited and frivolous university town, as Athens then was. Things went far better at wicked Corinth. It has been thought by some that Paul half repents (1 Cor. ii. 1) of his Athenian attempt at playing the philosopher. At any rate, he seems to have the contrast of the populations in view when he describes who it is that God chooses (1 Cor. i. 18, etc.). At Corinth Acts records the meeting with Aquila and Priscilla, lately arrived from Rome; work among Jews; the conversion of Crispus; transference as usual to Gentiles; a futile effort by non-Christian Jews to make trouble with Gallio. We have also to make room in our thoughts for the two epistles to Thessalonica. At the end of eighteen months, having founded a strong church, Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla leave for Ephesus, Paul going on to Jerusalem and Antioch (close of Second Missionary Journey) and returning again to Ephesus (beginning of Third Missionary Journey).

Soon after Paul's departure, a new Christian teacher, who has been in contact with Priscilla and Aquila at Ephesus, comes to Corinth—Apollos. He works with great success among Jews (Acts xviii. 27, 28), but unfortunately, against his will (comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 12),<sup>1</sup> becomes the head, or at

<sup>1</sup> In all probability; comp. p. 25.



least the battle-cry, of a party in the church who are impatient with what they think the simplicity of St. Paul's teaching. Apollos therefore withdraws again to Ephesus (comp. again 1 Cor. xvi. 12). The trouble due to party spirit is one of the main topics in 1 Corinthians. We must refer to a still earlier time—but obviously after Paul was known and loved at Corinth—a letter by St. Paul to which he refers at 1 Cor. v. 9, and of which it is *possible* that a fragment has accidentally been preserved at 2 Cor. vi. 14–vii. 1. After the dispatch of this earliest “Epistle to the Corinthians,”<sup>1</sup> there came a reply from Corinth containing a set of questions to St. Paul (see 1 Cor. vii. 1, etc. etc.). And there came other messengers besides Apollos —“some of Chloe's household” (1 Cor. i. 11) and Stephanas with two companions (xvi. 17; comp. i. 16, xvi. 15). Conceivably these two embassies might be one and the same; but it is not probable. The Stephanas party seem to have carried the Corinthian letter of questions; Paul's thanks for their visit suggest that they had come to Ephesus not on personal business, but on church business or in compliment to the Apostle. The Chloe party, on the other hand (i. 11), divulged—what the church's official letter had evidently passed over in silence—the growing party divisions.

### I CORINTHIANS.

Besides the party strife, and the topics on which the Corinthians' letter put questions, St Paul's reply deals with two other evils—a gross marriage scandal (chap. v.), and the practice of carrying on

<sup>1</sup> See notes on 1 Cor. v. 9 *infra*.

lawsuits before pagan tribunals (chap. vi.). Also his answers to questions are enriched by a defence of his own apostolic right to receive a salary, which at the same time explains why he refused to take one (chap. ix.), and by the noble hymn in praise of love (chap. xiii.). The resurrection (chap. xv.) is not definitely mentioned as a subject on which the church had put a question; but probably it was—the formula (vii. 1, viii. 1, xii. 1) recurs again later (xvi. 1, xvi. 12). Similarly the position of women (xi. 2, etc.) is likely to have been one of the subjects on which the Corinthians requested guidance; but the abuses at the Lord's Supper (xi. 17–34) are introduced as something of which St. Paul had “heard” (from the Chloe party? Comp. i. 11). So we get the detailed scheme of this most orderly of Pauline epistles; although even in it we perceive a certain intricacy. (1) Opening greetings and thanksgivings (i. 1–9); (2) the parties, with the spirit of revolt against Paul (i. 10–iv. 21); (3) the case of incest (chap. v; verses 9–13 correct a perverse misunderstanding of his former letter); (4) the lawsuits (chap. vi.; vers. 9–20, general denunciation of immorality); (5) marriage problems (chap. vii.; references to the Corinthians' letter begin here); (6) meats consecrated to idols (viii. 1–xi. 1; sub-topic, Paul's waiving of rights, chap. ix.); (7) position of women (xi. 2–16); (8) the Lord's Supper (xi. 17–34); (9) spiritual gifts (chaps. xii.–xiv.), incorporating the praise of love (chap. xiii.) and returning once more to the woman question (?xiv. 34); (10) the resurrection (chap. xv.); (11) the collection for Jerusalem (xvi. 1–9); (12) movements of Timothy (xvi. 10, 11) and Apollos (ver. 12); (13) final greetings (xvi. 13–24).

## Thessalonians and Corinthians 25

Several of these points call for some explanation.

The key to the whole epistle lies in Paul's treatment of the factions (No. 2). What those of Chloe's house had told, Apollos and the Stephanas party must have confirmed. There are four parties (i. 12), or rather perhaps just three—one of Paul, one of Apollos, one of Cephas or Simon Peter. If there was also a separate party "of Christ," it must have been a Jewish-Christian faction, more embittered than the Cephas faction (comp. 2 Cor. x. 7; 1 Cor. ix. probably replies in advance to the malicious attacks of Judaisers). But what was the tendency of the Apollos party? Considering the many traces of a frivolous spirit of enlightenment at Corinth, we must judge it probable that, involuntarily, by his intellectual brilliancy, Apollos had stimulated this mood of mind. We cannot conceive that the conceit so tellingly rebuked at the beginning of chap. viii. was ignored when Paul was classifying the factionists. So we have three definite groups—the central party, loyal to Paul, but unduly partisan; the radicals or enlightened men, carried away by a misinterpretation of Apollos; and the reactionary Judaising section, who appeal to Peter, with perhaps a subsection who appeal to physical contact with Jesus Christ through His apostles or kinsmen. Paul's purpose in intervening is not to back his friends but to blame all partisanship. The bare existence of parties is a "carnal" thing. They ought to be loyal not to men but to the Divine Lord; subordinately, they ought all to recognise, as the common possession of all, the man who, under Christ, and by Christ's grace, founded their church.

The scandalous marriage (No. 3) was reported to

Paul by verified rumours or by some one of the personal messengers.<sup>1</sup> Details are unknown to us. We are not compelled to think that the father was alive; but he may have been. In any case, it had happened that the father, after dissolution of one marriage by death or (in heathen days) by divorce, had contracted a further marriage, and that a son by the former union had now "married" his step-mother.<sup>2</sup>

Rumour may have acquainted Paul with the law-suits (No. 4). He condemns the habit; better be wronged than secure one's rights by dragging a fellow-Christian before a heathen tribunal! The motives which lead St. Paul to speak thus are obvious enough; yet the heathen Government, if it had learned the nature of his advice, must have resented the "pride" of Christians in treating the civil administration as an unclean thing.

The Corinthian letter had asked Paul about second marriages and about marriage in general (No. 5). The topic is one of great delicacy, and, along with fine wisdom, the Apostle's teaching seems to include elements that are merely temporary. He writes to men taking a low view of the benefits of marriage; if we really view it more worthily, the Apostle's advice does not fully apply to us. Yet no chapter in the N.T. is more instructive as to the actual state of ethical life in the primitive churches, or as to the various standards of authority which Paul recognises—Christ's command (ver. 10), Paul's command (vers. 12, 17), Paul's permission (ver. 6), Paul's advice

<sup>1</sup> See note on v. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The present writer has offered some conjectures on this painful history in *Expositor* for September 1908.

## Thessalonians and Corinthians 27

(vers. 25, 40). Some perhaps at Corinth had condemned marriage altogether, and others had mocked at their scruples. St. Paul, moved partly by the belief that married life means lessened earnestness, partly by the danger of persecution, partly by the conviction that the Advent is close at hand, plainly asserts that *celibacy is best*. But, no less plainly, *marriage is good and lawful*. And a *marriage once contracted binds one in conscience and before the Lord*.<sup>1</sup>

The argument about idol meats (No. 6) is complicated, and different views have been taken of its force. The present writer still judges as he did more than twenty years ago (*Christ and the Jewish Law*, Appendix D). There were scrupulous persons at Corinth who saw danger everywhere, and enlightened persons who could see it nowhere. Paul is in agreement with the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv. 29), though he enforces its findings by his own arguments, and, if necessary, on his own interpretation. He does not begin by uttering his full thought. (a) Chap. viii. : Granted that an idol—not the image but the god—is nothing at all, simple souls believe they are worshipping a real rival of the God of heaven, and hence sacrifices are no trifles. It is abominable to be mixed up with them, in the gross form of accepting hospitality at an idol's temple. (b) Chap. ix. : It is a good thing to be able to waive certain rights, as Paul, for sufficient reasons, waives his undoubted right to pecuniary support. (c) Chap. x. : Finally, though Zeus and Hermes do not exist, devils exist. "An idol is nothing in the world" : there

<sup>1</sup> A fuller discussion will be found in the present writer's article in *Expositor* for October 1907.



are no such beings ; but demons get the benefit of idol-worship as a whole. Buy meat freely—it is no worse for idolatrous incantations. Eat with heathen friends (if you will), only not in temples ; but if you are made aware that the flesh is “consecrated,” it is safer for your neighbour, and more for God’s glory, that you stop eating. Not physical contact with flesh consecrated to an idol, but moral compromise with heathenism, is sin.<sup>1</sup>

On the position of women (No. 7) there had been fierce controversy at Corinth. Here again there are differences of interpretation, and difficulties. *Perhaps* Paul interdicts the public ministry of women,<sup>2</sup> on the assumption that, if they officiated at church gatherings, they must unveil, and that unveiling was manifestly improper. This would leave women free to minister in private gatherings : the extreme Corinthian party opposed to women’s speaking in public may have blamed even that. The other view of Paul’s meaning is,<sup>3</sup> She may speak if veiled. The extreme positions would then be : No speech at all, and : Unveiled speech.

There had been selfish and noisy scenes at the Lord’s Supper (No. 8). The enlightened ones treated it like a common meal ; and there was no general sharing of provisions. Although these scenes must have given the first impulse towards the separation of the sacred Supper from the church love-feast or Agapé (Jude 12), St. Paul does not forbid them to make a meal of it. What

<sup>1</sup> The problem in Rom. xiv. is different. Conscientious vegetarianism is there in view, whatever it may have grown out of.

<sup>2</sup> As at xiv. 34, 35 ; see notes there.

<sup>3</sup> Inconsistently with xiv. 34, 35.

he tells them is that they must feast *together*, and must remember all through that it is *a sacred communion*. This is our earliest account in writing, by many years, of the institution and meaning of the Lord's Supper.

The spiritual gifts (No. 9), especially speaking with tongues—in Greek, *Glossolaly*—divided the church. Some shrank from it ("forbid not," xiv. 39) altogether—these were the enlightened ones. Others threw themselves into it wherever it carried them. Paul steers a middle course with wonderfully firm hand. All gifts are good. Tongues are lowest; love is highest. No gift is to be used apart from reverence and moral self-control. Of gifts lesser than love, prophecy is far the best in its effects both on saints and sinners.

Enlightenment had denied the possibility of physical resurrection (No. 10). Paul replies—It is a fact of the past, and basis of all our hopes, in the case of Jesus Christ. (Here we have again much the earliest written testimony to Christ's resurrection and the post-resurrection appearances). It is also a blessed certainty of the future. At the same time, there must be a transformation. Not a carnal but a spiritual body is to clothe us hereafter.

## II CORINTHIANS.

Evidently the enlightened wing of Corinthian opinion was the chief care to St. Paul when he wrote 1 Corinthians. Later, they were displaced or entered into strange fusion with a party of bigoted Judaisers. When Paul dispatched 1 Corinthians from Ephesus—conceivably by Titus—Timothy was on his way to Corinth by the long

land route (1 Cor. iv. 17, xvi. 10). Paul meant soon to follow, also by Macedonia (xvi. 5, 6). But troubles of a new intensity quickly arose, like squalls on a mountain tarn; Acts is silent regarding them, and we have to divine them dimly. It seems almost certain that Paul visited Corinth (see 2 Cor. xii. 14, xiii. 1), possibly to carry through his policy in regard to the scandal mentioned in 1 Cor. v.; that he then promised to alter his route, and pay two visits (2 Cor. i. 15, 16), on leaving Ephesus—one on his way to Macedonia, one when quitting Macedonia for Jerusalem; that, soon after he had left Corinth, he was attacked and insulted by some church member (2 Cor. ii. 5, etc., vii. 12), instigated by Judaisers (xi. 4, 5, etc. etc.). What follows is from his own plain record—that grief brought him very near death (i. 8, 9); that he sent off by Titus (vii. 8) a severe and angry letter; that he now fell back on the original plan of travelling by Troas and Macedonia, not finding it in his heart to face the church till it had become repentant (i. 23; comp. xiii. 2, ii. 12, 13, vii. 6, viii. 1)—here we must insert the uproar (Acts xix. 23–41); that, after torturing anxiety and depression, Titus brought good news to Macedonia (ii. 12, 13, vii. 6, ix. 15), and consented to return to Corinth in advance of St. Paul with another letter, *i.e.* 2 Corinthians (or perhaps 2 Cor. i.–ix. and xiii. 11–14). We do not think, then, that Paul's expressions of forgiveness (2 Cor. ii. 10, vii. 12) refer to the man who made the shameless marriage rebuked in 1 Cor. v. (see p. 33). Paul's language in 2 Corinthians is that of generous forgiveness for a personal wrong; there was no room for personal forgiveness of a wilful outrage on the church and



## Thessalonians and Corinthians 31

its Lord. It is also possible, though not certain, that 2 Cor. x. 1-xiii. 10 is really the intermediate severe letter carried by Titus, or part of that communication.<sup>1</sup>

If 1 Corinthians is clear and well planned, both beginning and end of 2 Corinthians are confused with tingling emotion, largely—though, thank God, by no means wholly—with the emotion of pain. Paul himself had spoken of men who died at Corinth as having been punished with death because of the riotous scenes at the Lord's Table (1 Cor. xi. 30), even although, through this chastening, their souls were to be saved (ver. 32). Paul had further demanded that the incestuous man should be given over to Satan (v. 5) for bodily death, that he also, purified from his deep stain, might be saved in the day of the Lord. Subsequently to the writing of these passages, it would seem that St. Paul himself, a man so weak in bodily health, had been denounced by slanderous whispers. It must be secret sin that makes him suffer so! Nor can he defend himself without telling of his supreme rapture, and of the profound humiliation that counterbalanced it, the "stake in the flesh" (2 Cor. xii.). An undercurrent of self-defence may be recognised all through the brighter chapters i.-ix.—that remains true, even if we place their composition later than the composition of x.-xiii. Thus we can distinguish (1) i.-vii., thanksgivings, explanations, exhortations; (2) viii., ix., the collection; (3) x. 1-xiii. 10, rebuke of the Corinthians, open self-vindication, and vehement counter-attack on the wandering Judaisers;

<sup>1</sup> The writer has discussed these matters more fully in an article in the *Expositor* for October 1908.

(4) xiii. 11-14, concluding greetings (whether originally the conclusion of *all the chapters* as these now stand, or rather of chaps. i.-ix). It would help us little to map out the swaying trains of thought and emotion in greater detail.<sup>1</sup>

Did St. Paul triumph fully at Corinth? We cannot doubt that he did. On a reasonable view of the evidence, we find no trace of disloyalty at Corinth after this time. The sore trial through which he passed has enriched us with an epistle (or two epistles—or one epistle and the fragment of another) constituting a wonderful autobiography. What Matthew Arnold said of Byron's poems might be said of 2 Corinthians. Amid immense differences, St. Paul in these chapters resembles the unhappy poet in displaying "the pageant of his bleeding heart."

### THE TÜBINGEN THEORY.<sup>2</sup>

The evidence for the genuineness of both 1 and 2 Corinthians is extraordinarily strong. In the case of 1 Corinthians, evidence begins as early as Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians (c. 96 A.D.)—a letter from the church at Rome to the church at Corinth. Other party troubles of a personal kind had been agitating the Corinthian Christians about that time, and Paul's authority is invoked as something to which they, of all men, must bow. But indeed only a hare-brained criticism can argue that either 1 Corinthians or 2 Corinthians is a forgery—

<sup>1</sup> On vi. 14-vii. 1, see p. 23 above, and notes on the passage. There is no real ground for the idea of some that chap. ix. could not have been written at the same time as chap. viii.; see note below at the head of chap. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Compare also notes below upon 1 Cor. i. 12, iv. 6, xv. 11.

*forgery* is the word we must use, if writings so full of the personal note are said not to be really by the author whose name they bear. The assertion is made, but it is an idle one. No forger could have produced either letter. It would "pass the wit of man" to do so.

On the other hand, it is a matter of considerable interest historically that the study of 1 and 2 Corinthians started F. C. Baur upon the Tübingen theory—that Pauline or Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians were fiercely opposed to each other, till they worked out an artificial harmony by prolonged compromise, resulting in the Catholic Church. Baur broke ground first of all with a dissertation on *The Christ Party at Corinth*. Taking "I am of Christ" (1 Cor. i. 12) as a party warcry, and interpreting it in the light of 2 Cor. x. 7, Baur inferred that bitter Judaisers were active at Corinth from the very first, and that Paul "transferred the matter in a figure to himself and Apollos" (1 Cor. iv. 6), because the differences between Paul and "Cephas" were too hot for handling. Again, Paul's forgiveness in 2 Cor. (ii. 10, vii. 12; comp. p. 30) was assumed to refer to the scandal of 1 Cor. v.; i.e., it was assumed that Paul had been unable to carry his point. Naturally Gal. ii. played a great part in Baur's scheme. Assuming that the attitude of tension revealed there (ver. 14) was normal, he claimed to have proved a fundamental divergence between St. Peter and St. Paul. On the other hand, defending the position that Revelation is by John Zebedee, Baur held that the invective of ii. 2, 9, 14, 20 was aimed at Paul. But the chief support of Baur's theory lay outside the N.T. in the pseudo Clementine literature.

These writings have nothing to do with the valuable epistle of Clement referred to above, nor yet with the early Christian sermon which has come to be known as 2 Clement. They are a later romance—fiercely Judaizing, and containing a very bitter attack on St. Paul under the name of Simon Magus (see Acts viii. 9). Baur assumed that here we had the original Jewish Christian attitude, and he taught that the Gospels were party pamphlets.

Almost all this theory has broken down, bit by bit. We know now that St. Paul was *not* recoiling in 2 Corinthians from the demands of 1 Cor. v. It is granted now that Rev. ii. does *not* denounce St. Paul, but denounces immoral teachers. And it is granted that the pseudo Clementine literature does not reveal the sentiments of the mass of early Jewish Christians, but those of a later schismatical sect. Nor were the Gospels mere “tendency” manifestoes.

On the other hand, Baur has pointed out, in a way never to be forgotten, how deep the cleavage between Jewish and Gentile believers threatened to grow, and how much we owe to St. Paul as the dauntless champion of freedom, and also as the unwearied worker for unity and brotherly love. Baur saw, very clearly, those differences which the Christian reader may be tempted to gloss over. What he failed to see was the real meaning—for every true Christian—of unity *in Christ*.

1 Thess. i. 1.

GREETING.

1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ : Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. **Paul.** Without title, such as "apostle" ; so also 2 Thess. i. 1. Later, when Paul had to vindicate his position, epistles generally open with titles. **Silvanus**, or Silas (Acts xv. 22, 40, etc. etc.). Probably also the Silvanus of 1 Pet. v. 12. **Timotheus.** R.V. throughout, "Timothy," as the more familiar form. Youngest of the three founders. See Acts xvi. 1, etc. Paul, however, is the real author of epistles ; see 1 Thess. ii. 18. The others simply join in greetings, or act as penmen. **church** is used in various extensions in the N.T. The two Gospel passages (Matt. xvi. 18, xviii. 17) refer to the universal Church of Christ. At the other extreme we have churches meeting in a single house (*e.g.* 1 Cor. xvi. 19). This, the most common usage, is midway—the church of one whole town. (See also on 1 Cor. i. 2.) **in.** "In Christ" has been called "the monogram of St. Paul." We might paraphrase "the church which lives in God the Father and . . . Christ." **the Lord.** The primary Christian confession runs that "Jesus is Messiah" (*e.g.* 1 John v. 1), or—

if there is danger of Messiah being taken in too poor a sense, under the influence of Jewish ideas—"is Lord" (e.g. 1 Cor. xii. 3; Phil. ii. 11), in a glory indistinguishable from that of God the eternal Father. We call the Saviour "our Lord"—our divine King—just as Roman Catholics call the Virgin "our Lady." Compare, at a lower level of meaning, Prayer Book references to "our Sovereign Lady" or "our Sovereign Lord." **Christ.** Greek form of Hebrew "Messiah," i.e. "Anointed," or "King." But already "Christ" is becoming one of the *proper names* borne by Jesus "the Christ" our Lord. **Grace.** The Greek salutation; literally "Be happy." Paul gives it a Christian sense—Be happy in the free bounty of God's *grace*. **peace.** The Hebrew or Arabic salutation: *Shalom*; *Salaam*. Also Christianised: "Be happy in God's peace." **from God our Father . . .** is omitted in R.V. No difference in meaning. Additions constantly crept into MSS as they were copied. Had these words been part of the original, it is not likely they would have been dropped in so many old copies. (Probably borrowed from 2 Thess. i. 2. A common source of error.)

1 Thess. i. 2-10.

### OPENING THANKS TO GOD.

- 2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention
- 3 of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;
- 4 knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.
- 5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also



in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance ;  
 as ye know what manner of men we were among you for  
 6 your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the  
 Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with  
 7 joy of the Holy Ghost : so that ye were ensamples to all  
 8 that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you  
 sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia  
 and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-  
 ward is spread abroad ; so that we need not to speak any  
 9 thing. For they themselves shew of us what manner of  
 entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God  
 10 from idols to serve the living and true God ; and to wait  
 for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead,  
 even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' conversion, and for the great impression produced by the news of it upon Christians everywhere.

2. **thanks.** Paul begins every epistle, if he possibly can, with thanks. In Galatians that is impossible, and in 1 Corinthians sadly limited. Here he speaks from a full heart.

3. **without ceasing.** One word in Greek : the same as at v. 17. What Paul bids others do, he does himself ; the prayerful man's continual remembrance is a continual prayer.

**faith . . . love . . . hope.** A favourite triad with St. Paul. Compare v. 8 ; Col. i. 4, 5 ; and especially 1 Cor. xiii. 13. They have come to be called the three Christian "graces" ; the "graces" of Greek mythology were images of physical beauty, but these of spiritual. Their symbols have been not badly fixed—Cross, Anchor (Heb. vi. 19), Heart. Catholic theology added Paul's three virtues to the four chief virtues recognised in pagan Greek philosophy—Courage, Temperance or Self-



control, Wisdom or Prudence, Justice—and made *seven* cardinal virtues. This is rather too rough-and-ready a way of piecing together natural and supernatural, divine and human. **work of faith.** Faith is no mere feeling. It gets to work. **labour.** A stronger but similar word. Hard work needs **love** to keep it up. **patience** is the due result of **hope.** See Rom. viii. 25; Lam. iii. 26, and John Ker's fine sermon on the latter (*First Series*). **in,** literally "of," goes closely with the word "hope."

4. **brethren.** One of the great titles for Christians (Acts i. 16, etc. etc.). We have one Father and "all we are brethren" (Matt. xxiii. 8). **beloved.** R.V. connects differently, "beloved of God"; A.V.'s "election of" or by "God" is hardly consistent with the order of the words in Greek. **election.** God's choosing of His people is proved to St. Paul by the fact of their conversion.

5. **For.** R.V. better, "How that." The Greek word may bear either sense, but the context makes plain that Paul is expanding or explaining his statement—God chose you! Here is the first proof: the unusual glow and success with which Paul had been enabled to preach at Thessalonica. **we were.** R.V., "shewed ourselves." That is often the meaning. Literally "became"; and perhaps so here? The faithful missionary *becomes* a better man and better Christian while his hearers are becoming converts. **among you.** R.V., with a minute difference in reading, "toward you." Sense hardly changed.

6. **followers.** R.V., more literally, "imitators." Compare 1 Cor. xi. 1. **affliction.** Outwardly from petty persecution, yet such as might any day grow

worse. **joy.** Inwardly; not only in spite of but because of the petty crosses.

7. **ensamples.** They were a pattern church—first to their nearer neighbours, in Greece proper (Athens, Corinth, Cenchreæ), and in Northern Greece or Macedonia (Philippi, Berea, possibly other churches).

8. But the example spread **every** where. As there was little Christianity Westwards in advance of Paul's preaching, we must think of churches farther East, in Syria and Asia Minor. **word of the Lord.** Such as God gave His prophets in the O.T. Now, revelation has reached its climax (Heb. i. 1, 2). **we need not to speak any thing.** All personal reports are anticipated by joyful rumour.

9. **entering in.** Access not only to their friendship but to their hearts and consciences. **idols.** Originally statues of pagan gods. Now used for these gods themselves. Comp. 1 Cor. viii. 1. **the** (living God). R.V., "a," is more literal, and gives more emphasis to the contrast-word "living." **living and true.** Real, in contrast with the sham gods of the idolaters. First point of the gospel—faith in one God. (A church of converted heathen—Intro. p. 8.)

10. A second point of the gospel—faith in Christ, with special emphasis (1) on the Second Coming, but also with emphasis (2) upon redemption; comp. Rom. v. 9.

**delivered.** R.V., "delivereth," is more literal. Doubtful if there is emphasis on the time ("Process of deliverance still going on"?). Rather, Christ is *our Saviour*; that is His personal quality. The doctrine, though merely hinted, is there in

St. Paul's mind (Introd. p. 5). **the wrath to come.** At the Day of Judgment (Rom. i. 18, ii. 6-9).

**I Thess. ii. 1-12.**

**THE UNBLEMISHED CHARACTER OF THE  
CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES.**

For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you,  
 2 that it was not in vain : but even after that we had  
 suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know,  
 at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you  
 3 the gospel of God with much contention. For our ex-  
 hortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile :  
 4 but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the  
 gospel, even so we speak ; not as pleasing men, but God,  
 5 which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we  
 flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness ;  
 6 God is witness : nor of men sought we glory, neither of  
 you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burden-  
 7 some, as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle  
 8 among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children : so  
 being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to  
 have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but  
 9 also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye  
 remember, brethren, our labour and travail : for labouring  
 night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto  
 10 any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. Ye  
 are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and  
 unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe :  
 11 as ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged  
 12 every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye  
 would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his  
 kingdom and glory.

Their "entering in" (i. 9) had been firm but

gentle towards their hearers, and quite disinterested. Paul must already have been attacked in point of character, probably by Jews. The average Jew would see in him nothing but a deserter and renegade (Introd. p. 11).

1. **yourselves know.** If the churches generally knew (i. 9), how much more the Thessalonians themselves! **brethren.** See i. 4. **entrance.** R.V., "entering"; uniform with i. 9 (which see), same Greek word. **was not.** R.V., "hath not been found." Literally "became." See i. 5. **in vain.** R.V., "vain." Literally "empty." Their coming was not barren of results!

2. R.V., more precisely, "having suffered before, and been shamefully entreated." Comp. Acts xvi. 19-24. **Philippi.** Home of the first Christian church established by St. Paul *in Europe*. The epistle written to it from Paul's Roman prison shows no fear of anything wrong at Philippi except some personal jealousies. It sent him gifts in money (Phil. iv. 15, 16). He would not trust some churches to do the same thing (2 Cor. xi. 8, 9, xii. 13). **were.** "became" (i. 5). It took courage, in the face of persecution. **in our God.** Source of this courage. **gospel of God.** Good news "from" God (Rom. i. 1; and *concerning* Christ, *ibid.* i. 3. So Paul usually speaks).

3. **of.** "from," arising out of. **deceit.** R.V. better, "error." First, the Apostles were not themselves deceived. Next, they did not deceive others in **uncleanness** or **guile.**

4. **were allowed.** R.V., "have been approved." God had tested their fitness. **trieth** (same word). R.V. here, "proveth." Almost a quotation of Prov. xvii. 3. God tests all men, His servants most.

5. **flattering words.** An unfaithful Christian teacher may make his message too smooth and agreeable. **a cloke**, etc. Covetousness concealed behind a pious-seeming outward life. Evidently the greedy and sly evangelist was known even in the first century. There are quaintly strict regulations for getting rid of him in the book called "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" (Greek *Didaché*).

6. **of (you) . . . of (others).** "from." **burdensome.** Especially perhaps by requiring pay (ver. 9). Margin, A.V. and R.V., less probably suggests a vaguer sense. **the apostles.** "apostles." Paul and his friends were not the only apostles! We should remember, indeed, that the N.T. does not confine the word to the Twelve, or to the Twelve and St. Paul. See further in 1 Cor. ix. 9.

7. **her children.** R.V., literally, "her own children." There is point in this seemingly awkward change. Paul compares his love to a mother's care for her offspring, not merely to a nursemaid's care, however faithful.

8. **so.** "thus," or "even so." **were.** R.V., "were become." See on i. 5. **dear.** R.V., "very dear." Literally "beloved," as at Matt. iii. 17, etc. etc.

9. **travail.** Hard toil. **night and day.** Encroaching even upon hours needed for sleep in order to fulfil the twofold task, of serving in the gospel and of winning daily bread. See 1 Cor. ix. 15-19. Barnabas also took no pay (*ibid.* ver. 6).

10. **God also.** Comp. 1 Cor. iv. 4. **holily.** From a more classical root than the usual Bible word for holiness, but equally well so translated. **unblameably.** Giving no *just cause* for blame.

**behaved ourselves.** A.V. (correctly) gives this sense here. See on i. 5. Literally "became."

11. **Fatherly faithfulness**, along with motherly tenderness (ver. 7). **comforted you.** R.V., "encouraging you." This sense of "comfort" is now obsolete.

12. **that ye would.** R.V., "to the end that ye should." A small but unmistakable grammatical improvement. Paul speaks of the purpose, not purport, of his teaching. Little difference to the sense. **walk.** A Hebrew term for moral behaviour, good or bad. (See on 1 Cor. iv. 17.) **hath called.** R.V., "calleth." Probably no special note of time. God as the *personal Source* of the call which saves. Comp. i. 10. **unto.** R.V., "into." Where it *can* mean "into" it should. St. Paul may be thinking of the **kingdom** of God as present. But the kingdom is often—usually, in the epistles—thought of as future. Even if it is here taken as present, the preposition may fuse two meanings—"into" the existing kingdom, "unto" the coming glory.

### I Thess. ii. 13-16.

#### FURTHER THANKS: BLAME OF THE JEWS.

- 13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in
- 14 you that believe. For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judæa are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own country-
- 15 men, even as they have of the Jews: who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all



16 men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

Renewed thanksgiving—for the true conversion (i. 9) and steadfastness of the Thessalonians; passing into vehement denunciation of those instigators of persecution, the unbelieving Jews.

13. **For this cause.** (R.V. reads two “ands”; so it renders “*And for this cause we also.*”) May point backwards or forwards. Here perhaps forwards, to **because**, etc. (R.V. “that” does not seem to alter sense.) **because** R.V., “that.” **the word of God which ye heard of us.** R.V., “the word of the message, even the word of God.” Much more precise. Paul describes the word of God *spoken* by prophets and by Christ’s faithful servants. In the Bible we have some of these messages—and other things like them—written down. We rely on the Bible; but every loyal preacher or teacher of Christ’s truth is a channel of “the word of God.” **ye received it.** R.V., “accepted,”—a different Greek word. **also.** Why “also”? The highest and deepest verification: God’s word has proved itself Divine *in you*!

14. **followers.** “imitators” (i. 6). It was no small thing for these half-fledged churches of the Gentiles to be told that they were kinsmen of the mother Church in Palestine. **your own countrymen.** The direct agents in the petty persecution at Thessalonica.

15. **their own prophets.** R.V., “the prophets,” following a shorter reading. Compare Matt. xxiii. 37, or Rev. xi. 8. **persecuted us.** R.V., “drove us out.” (Acts xvii. 5–8; Introd. p. 8.)



they please not God. None can please Him who disbelieve in Christ. **contrary to all men.** A common pagan taunt against Jews. The great Christian Jew borrows it, under the impression made by Jewish hatred of the gospel (next verse).

16. The Jews neither eat nor allow others access to the gospel food. **to fill up**, etc. Comp. Gen. xv. 16; also Matt. xxiii. 32 (spoken of the Pharisees). The Jews have taken their line, and, as St. Paul here judges, their choice has become their doom (Intro. p. 11). **for.** R.V., "but." A better attested reading. Ironical? "They need not fill the cup—it is full already"! **wrath.** Literally "the wrath" (i. 10 and note there). **is come.** Literally "is come in advance." Deliberate haters of the gospel and enemies of God are judged and doomed already. Comp. John iii. 18.

1 Thess. ii. 17-20.

**PAUL'S LONGINGS. HIS FIRST PLAN.**

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly  
18 to see your face with great desire. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but  
19 Satan hindered us. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord  
20 Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.

He now passes to more recent history. How he had longed to revisit them!

17. **taken from you.** R.V., "bereaved of you"; i.e., literally, "made orphans from you." Comp. John xiv. 18. "Parental sorrow" (vers. 7, 11). **a short time.** Literally "an hour's season."

Some months, spent between Berea, Athens, and Corinth, where (near the beginning of the long Corinthian sojourn, no doubt) Timothy arrived with tidings (iii. 6). **in presence.** Literally "in face." **not in heart.** There was no separation in feeling or affection.

18. **Wherefore.** R.V., following a better reading, "Because." I did *try* to come back to you! More than once! **we . . . I.** It has been quaintly suggested that at first all three proposed to revisit Thessalonica, then Paul himself, but that both schemes fell through. Most likely the "we" here becomes personal to St. Paul and the "I Paul" is explanatory of "we." See iii. 1. **again,** *i.e.* a second time. **Satan hindered.** How, we do not know. See *Intro.* pp. 5, 6.

19. **crown of rejoicing.** R.V., "of glorying," *i.e.* boasting. Compare, *e.g.*, Rom. v. 3. Not the same word as "glory," ver. 20. (*Intro.* p. 9.) There may be a reference to Greek games (1 Cor. ix. 25). The triumph of a Christian teacher's life is those he wins for Christ. **coming.** Literally "presence"—full, personal, sensible—of the now seeming-absent Lord (comp. 2 Thess. ii 9 and note).

I Thess. iii. 1-5.

## PAUL'S LONGING FOR HIS CONVERTS.

### A SECOND PLAN CARRIED OUT.

Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it  
 2 good to be left at Athens alone ; and sent Timotheus, our  
 brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in  
 the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you  
 3 concerning your faith : that no man should be moved by  
 these afflictions : for yourselves know that we are appointed

4 thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation: even as it  
5 came to pass, and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

Paul had sent back Timothy on a visit, to strengthen their hearts against affliction by his words.

1. **we.** Plainly literary, in this verse; Paul speaks. It is one man who is left "alone" by detaching a companion. Also ver. 5 repeats the statement in 1st person singular. **forbear.** Anxiety had grown unbearable. **at Athens.** Introd. pp. 8, 9.

2. **minister of God.** R.V., "God's minister." Timothy was Paul's brother, God's servant. These words should make the Thessalonians think more of young Timothy, who seems to have been of a gentle nature, and perhaps had difficulty in asserting himself (1 Cor. xvi. 10; 1 Tim. iv. 12). **and our fellowlabourer.** Superfluous; "our brother" is what he calls Timothy. Not in best MSS; R.V. therefore omits. **comfort.** Same root as "paraclete"—John xiv. 16, etc.; 1 John ii. 1; best translated Advocate or One-who-is-called-in—and as "Son of exhortation" (R.V.) or "of consolation" (A.V.), Acts iv. 36. In point of fact, Timothy's mission was not simply one of comfort—in the modern sense—but of strengthening and *exhorting*. (So A.V. renders at ii. 11. It is a different word which A.V. there renders "comforted.")

3. **we are appointed.** Literally "we lie in our place." We are put in life, and in the Christian life, in order to suffer for God.

4. **before.** "Beforehand." we should suffer. R.V. more accurately, "we are to suffer." It is a general statement, reiterated as he now writes, regarding all Christian lives at all times. The O.T. broke its heart over the problem of the sufferings of the good (*e.g.* Job ; Ps. lxxiii.). Christ transforms the problem into an experience of blessedness, and gives victory through pain (Matt. v. 4, 10 ; see Rom. v. 3 ; 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10 ; Col. i. 24). **ye know.** By hard personal experience.

5. See ver. 1. **be.** Perhaps "prove." See i. 5. **in vain.** A great dread of St. Paul's. (For the words, comp. Isa. xlix. 4.) At Gal. ii. 2 he feared Judaisers were to destroy the churches in Galatia, and so appealed direct to the Twelve, to disown their self-styled friends. Phil. ii. 16, he rejoices to know of *one place* where he has worked to purpose ; 1 Thess. ii. 1 similarly. Yet he had had to leave so hurriedly ! What if the work has collapsed ? What if the converts have fallen away ?

#### 1 Thess. iii. 6-13.

#### THANKS FOR GOOD NEWS, AND PRAYER.

6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly  
7 to see us, as we also to see you : therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress  
8 by your faith : for now we live, if ye stand fast in the  
9 Lord. For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before  
10 our God ; night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in

- 11 your faith? Now God himself and our Father, and our  
12 Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And the  
Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward  
another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you :  
13 to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in  
holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of  
our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

Paul's longing for his converts; joy and thanks to God for Timothy's good report, with prayer that he may himself soon see them again, and that God may constantly and growingly bless them.—As low as Paul's emotional temperament sinks, in fear of losing his converts, so high does it bound up in joy and praise to God when good news comes.

6. **now.** "just now." Timothy was "just come." So R.V.—in archaic English: "even now." Paul's thankfulness at once overflows into a letter. **charity.** R.V. uniformly, "love." A.V. prefers the dignified Latinised "charity," but sometimes diverges into the Saxon "love." Moderns have sadly narrowed the meaning of "charity." (See notes on 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 3.) First, Paul is comforted by news of Thessalonian loyalty to his Master, and next to himself.

7. **in all our affliction.** He shares the experience of the Cross (ver. 4).

8. **now we live.** Bad news might have killed him. Good news—such good news—gives new life. **stand fast.** Like wrestlers, or soldiers repelling a dangerous attack (Eph. vi. 12-14, etc. etc.).

9. Joy becomes praise to God.

10. But praise must blend with petitionary prayer; and, as the hours of sleep have to be

curtailed for tentmaking (ii. 9; Acts xviii. 3), so they must be further curtailed for prayer. **perfect.** "complete." Not the regular word for "perfect." Paul had had to leave too soon—many things must be "lacking" in their Christianity. He has praised them warmly: now is the time to pass on to exhortation (chap. iv.). His is not the weak love which flatters. But neither is it the ungenial, scolding love which only rebukes—as if ashamed of tenderness. Also, before passing on to exhortation, he prays with them—asking God to fulfil his various longings concerning them.

11. May he revisit Thessalonica? (Yes: twice at any rate—Acts xx. 1 and 3.) We should observe how Paul instinctively brackets the Father and Christ as equal in power and glory.

12. A second and even greater petition. Whether Paul comes or not—and while he is present and absent alike—God give them more and more love! **the Lord.** Christ (1 Thess. i. 1). Not so used in 2 Thess.? (Introd. p. 19.) All blessedness comes from God *through the Saviour*. **even as we.** What a courageous good conscience! Comp. 1 Cor. xi. 1; Phil. i. 30. Such ought to belong to every worker for Christ.

13. **to the end.** Modern English, "in order that." The final purpose of God in blessing His children is to lead them to full salvation hereafter. **unblameable.** At the Judgment Day. **holiness** means primarily consecration or devotion to God. Heathen and Jewish religion is full of holy things; Christ bestows a Holy Spirit, who demands and creates holy persons, characters, human lives. **coming.** See ii. 19. **his saints,** or "holy ones." In the O.T. passage (Zech. xiv. 5) which first



describes God's solemn arrival to judge mankind with a great train of holy beings, these are *angels*. Probably it is so here; comp. Matt. xxv. 31. The N.T.—*e.g.* Acts ix. 32—calls all believers “saints,” and Paul *might* be thinking of the Christian dead (chap. iv. ver. 14); but if the truth of their full share in Christian blessedness had to come as a wonderful revelation to the readers, they would not naturally interpret this earlier verse of human souls.

# 1 Thess. iv. 1-8.

## FIRST ETHICAL ADMONITION.

Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound  
2 more and more. For ye know what commandments we  
3 gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from  
4 fornication: that every one of you should know how  
5 to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which  
6 know not God: that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and  
7 testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

To purity and chastity, with scrupulous business honour.

1. **Furthermore.** Literally “Finally.” **to walk.** See ii. 12. “even as ye do walk” is inserted by R.V. from the better authorities, Paul



again blending praise with exhortation; see on iii. 10.

3. **sanctification.** Making holy; consecration; devotion to God.

4. **his vessel.** His own wife; comp. 1 Pet. iii. 7. The life of marriage is to be in all purity and honour.

5. **lust of concupiscence.** R.V., "passion of lust." **Gentiles.** Their mocking neighbours. **who know not God.** See many O.T. passages; also note on 2 Thess. i. 8. St. Paul (Rom. i. 28) recognises a moral factor in heathen mankind's ignorance of God.

6. **in any matter.** "in business." R.V., "in the matter," makes the verse a warning against seducing a fellow-Christian's wife. More probably, here as elsewhere, Paul brackets as characteristic heathen vices covetousness and uncleanness. See, e.g., Col. iii. 5, etc. **of all such.** "in all these things."

7. **hath not called us.** "called us not"—at conversion. **unto holiness.** R.V., literally, "in sanctification." See on ver. 3.

8. **despiseth** (following the Latin or Vulgate Bible) brings out the meaning better than R.V., "rejecteth." God has warned us that He will punish. And it is already a "despising" of the Creator if we treat our fellows as mere means to the satisfaction of our covetousness or our lust. **who hath also given.** R.V., more literally, "giveth" (God is *the Giver of the Spirit*—see note on "hath called," ii. 12). O.T. promise in Ezek. xxxvi. 27 (xxxvii. 14). The sins rebuked are sins against our neighbour, but equally against God and His indwelling Spirit (Eph. iv. 30). One who was too sadly familiar, not indeed with business dishonesty,

but with dissipation and self-indulgence, has told us how such a life turns out:—

“Och! it hardens a’ within,  
And petrifies the feeling.”—BURNS.

### I Thess. iv. 9-12.

## SECOND AND THIRD ETHICAL ADMONITIONS.

9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write  
unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one  
10 another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren  
which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren,  
11 that ye increase more and more; and that ye study to be  
quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your  
12 own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk  
honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may  
have lack of nothing.

To brotherly love, already so manifest among them, and to quiet diligence in daily work (that they may not abuse the love of fellow-Christians, who might be willing to supply their wants? *Introd. p. 15*).

9. **But.** Very slight adversative force in the Greek word; “as to” might suffice without “but.” **brotherly love.** R.V., “love of the brethren.” Both are in the meaning—Christian brother’s love to Christian brother. It is one word in Greek—“Philadelphia”—as in the Asian city (*Rev. iii. 7, etc.*) founded by Ptolemy of Egypt surnamed Philadelphus, or as in William Penn’s “city of brotherly love,” named after the Christian virtue. **ye have no need.** Why then speak of it? Well, it is never superfluous to urge such central virtues “more and more.” And praise

like this makes way for the advice given! **that I write.** R.V., "that one write." Greek idiom expresses no pronoun. It just says "to write." **of God.** "by God." Taught-of-God is one word in Greek. The best teaching. Comp. Isa. liv. 13.

10. **in Macedonia.** Besides Philippi and Berea, there may have been other smaller churches, and perhaps scattered "brethren" too. **Beseech.** "Exhort." See on "comfort," iii. 2. **Increase.** "Abound." In this central grace of love.

11. **study.** Literally "be ambitious." **to be quiet.** What a telling paradox! What an uncommon ambition! **even as we commanded you.** While with them, Paul had set a good example too (ii. 9). It has been remarked that Paul cannot praise them (as a whole community) for self-control and industry: though he praises their faith and love.

12. **honestly.** "creditably." **without.** Unconverted Gentiles (as at 1 Cor. v. 12). What will the heathen think of over-excited Christians, who are slack perhaps in paying their debts? **lack of nothing.** Ellicott's translation "of no one" is grammatically possible but unsuitable. "We do not want to feel that we have need of nobody. The notion is churlish." See 1 Cor. xii. 21. When love takes the form of pecuniary generosity, one must take what the other gives. But there is danger in over-willingness to take (Harold Skimpole, in *Bleak House*). Best to aim at "needing nothing."

I Thess. iv. 13-18.

### SPECIAL MESSAGE OF COMFORT.

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as

14 others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus  
died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus  
15 will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by  
the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain  
unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which  
16 are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from  
heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and  
with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise  
17 first : then we which are alive and remain shall be caught  
up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in  
18 the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Where-  
fore comfort one another with these words.

There is no ground for faithless sorrow when  
fellow-believers die. They are safe, through Jesus,  
and will share every privilege of His return. Paul  
has had a special revelation, confirming this. Both  
classes shall meet the returning Jesus, and be with  
Him for ever!—We need not suppose they had  
asked Paul about this. It is enough that Timothy  
should have told him about their anxiety and  
dismay.

13. **ignorant.** They are as yet but ill-informed ;  
only half-evangelised. Comp. 1 Cor. x. 1, xii. 1. In  
other passages, again, the expression introduces  
statements of fact ; *e.g.* Rom. i. 13. When appealing  
to *known truths*, he speaks differently (1 Thess.  
ii. 9 ; 2 Thess. ii. 5). **are asleep.** Literally “ have  
fallen asleep ” ; but R.V., following a better read-  
ing, “ fall asleep.” It is the repeated occurrence of  
death among them which is disturbing the Thessa-  
lonians.—Many languages and literatures compare  
sleep and death ; the very word “ cemetery ”—  
a classical word—does so. The N.T. adopts the  
comparison. We need not press it so far as to  
hold that the Christian dead are unconscious.

Only, seeming death is to us a safe rest. **others.** R.V. more forcibly and exactly, "the rest." A few among mankind (so far) had been begotten again to the living hope. The civilised heathenism of that age regarded a future life as a mere nursery tale. There is beauty and restraint, but there is also despair, in classical epitaphs and poems.

**14. if we believe.** The construction is technically inexact. "If we believe" in Jesus, we should also "believe" in the happiness of departed saints. Or, "if Jesus died and rose," those who die in the Lord must rise again. But the objective facts of the gospel cannot work in us unless they become a subjective faith. Hence the "if we believe." Faith puts us at the commencement of all blessings, including this happy knowledge regarding the Christian dead. **Jesus died.** "Christ died, the Shepherd for the sheep; we only fall asleep." **He rose again.** Those who have died in the Lord must rise through Him. **in Jesus.** Literally "through Jesus." It is hard to justify here (but it stands plainly 1 Cor. xv. 18) the translation "in Jesus." Here, what is said is this—God will bring the Christian dead *with* Jesus and *through* Jesus. He is Himself the resurrection (John xi. 25). Death, and what lies beyond it—both are transfigured by Him who makes all things new.

**15. For.** Here comes the special answer to the special fears of the Thessalonians. Their dear dead friends are not being deprived of anything at all. Comp. Rom. xiv. 8. **by the word of the Lord.** This might refer to a remembered saying of the Master's while on earth. More probably, to a new revelation by vision, as at 2 Cor. xii. 9. "by" is literally "in." We might paraphrase ("We say)

as a word of the Lord." Christ guarantees Paul's assurance. Our dead lose nothing! **we** (shall in no wise). Paul speaks as a probable survivor (Introd. p. 13). **prevent.** "anticipate." "Prevenient" grace comes *before* man has prayed or has deserved to be helped. R.V., "precede." The meaning here is rather "have the advantage over."

16. **For.** Apparently Paul has never previously drawn the picture of the Last Day in such clear detail. **the Lord himself.** His personal manifest "presence"—the central thing in Christ's second "Coming" (ii. 19, iii. 13). **descend from heaven.** Comp. Dan. vii. 13; Matt. xxiv. 30, xxvi. 64; Acts i. 11. **a shout.** Literally "a shout of command." It seems as if this were pictured three times over in three forms—the Master's own voice ("With His great commanding word, The Lord shall come"—*By Christ redeemed*; comp. John v. 28, 29), then as the voice of His servant the archangel, then as a trumpet-signal. **archangel.** The word occurs again Jude 9, with which compare Dan. x. 13, 21, xii. 1. Gabriel in Daniel is "the man Gabriel," and in Luke i. "the angel"—not *archangel*. **trump.** Supernatural trumpets when the Law is given at Sinai (Ex. xix. 16. Comp. also Matt. xxiv. 31; 1 Cor. xv. 52). **the dead in Christ.** Christian dead, and, as such, still alive *in Him* (i. 1). **first.** Before what next verse describes. There is no reference in this passage (nor at 1 Cor. xv.) to the doom of Christ's enemies. Some have thought St. Paul did not teach *their* resurrection. But comp. Acts xxiv. 15. And Paul, by choice or instinct, might omit the terrible side of judgment when comforting anxious or doubting hearts.—The rising of the Christian dead "first" does not give *them* an advan-



tage over living survivors. Both classes soar to meet Christ (next verse); and the Christian dead must come to life if they are to join living Christians in welcoming the Master.

**17. in the clouds.** Perhaps going forth to meet Christ that they may return with Him to the conquered and redeemed earth. **in.** Literally "into" **the air.** Perhaps "caught up into the air." Perhaps really a license for "in." No difference in meaning. **ever . . with the Lord.** On this text, Montgomery's "Forever with the Lord" is written.—Much in Paul's picture of this great state entry of Jesus Christ is poetical. We must not make a doctrine out of every detail. But what he ends with is the Christian's abiding hope. Hence it accompanies St. Paul when he changes his personal expectation; see Phil. i. 23 (Introd. p. 13). If some of what he says here is husk or drapery, that is core and kernel.

**18. comfort.** The right translation *here* (see on iii. 2).

#### I Thess. v. 1-11.

#### THE SUDDEN RETURN OF CHRIST.

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no  
 2 need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the  
 3 night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a  
 4 woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should over-  
 5 take you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us

7 watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night ; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.  
 8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love ; and for an helmet, the hope  
 9 of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath,  
 10 but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should  
 11 live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

The essential truth about the time of Christ's return is that it is sudden ; and only the morally watchful may look for it with hope. But these may have perfect trust in their Lord.

1. **of.** "concerning." **times and seasons.** The two words occur together Eccles. iii. 1 ; Dan. ii. 21 ; Acts i. 7. "Season" is a more special limited time ; hence sometimes "opportunity," as at Eph. v. 16 or Col. iv. 5. Times, till the Advent ? Season, of it ? **that I write.** Almost as at iv. 9, but passive here ; comp. R.V.

2. **day of the Lord.** O.T. expression for the great day of God's manifestation and working ; *e.g.* Amos v. 18 ; Isa. xiii. 6. In N.T., always used of Christ's Second Coming. **as a thief.** Absolutely unexpectedly. **in the night.** Not found in the Gospel passages, *e.g.* Matt. xxiv. 43, nor at Rev. iii. 3, xvi. 15, nor in the true text of 2 Pet. iii. 10. Still, the Gospel passages plainly apply to night dangers. They that steal do so mainly by night, and the terror is greatest then.

3. **shall say.** "are saying" — all along, as they usually have been saying and thinking. **travail.** Another image of suddenness, pain, fear. **they.** People generally ; the careless world. Comp. Matt. xxiv. 38 ; Luke xvii. 26-30.

4. **darkness.** The moral sense of the contrast with light begins to make itself felt here. **as a thief.** "as thieves" (R.V. margin) is probably just a blunder of its "ancient authorities."

5. **children.** R.V., "sons." Literal, and acc. to the Hebrew usage imitated in Paul's Greek. "Son of peace," e.g. (Luke x. 6), is a peaceable person, destined to share in the great peace of God's salvation. "Sons of light" are *light in the Lord* (Eph. v. 8). **of darkness.** Doing what are called "deeds of darkness." Literally, town authorities find that good street-lighting is one great safeguard against vice and crime.

6. **sleep.** The sleep of moral indifference. **others.** Literally and R.V., "the rest." Comp. iv. 13. Paul sees around him a non-Christian world steeped in godless security. **watch and be sober.** Two almost synonymous expressions, filling out each other's meaning. Be not tipsy sentinels! Let neither drunkenness nor any other vice mar our faithfulness.—Kipling's hymn to "Mithras" (in his *Puck*), though addressed to a heathen god, is full of Christian ideas.

7. Night is the obvious time both for slumber and for revelry—"making a night of it."

8. We Christians have no night in our lives. It is all day with us, as if heaven (Rev. xxi. 25) in a sense had begun. **who are.** Literally "being." R.V. explains well, "since we are." The Christian armour, most fully inventoried Eph. vi. 11, etc., is based on the description of *God's* armour as a hero rescuing His people (Isa. lix. 17). **Faith and love** are a coat of magic mail, which makes the wearer invulnerable. God wore the magic helmet of **salvation** or victory—who can fight against God?

With us, it is the **hope** of a salvation to be perfected when Christ returns; comp. Rom. v. 9, 10, xiii. 11. The very hope has magic power (1 Thess. i. 3).

9. **hath not appointed.** "appointed us not." He chose us for very different things (i. 4). **wrath** (i. 10). The lot of Christ's enemies, at His coming. **to obtain salvation.** R.V. "to the obtaining of" is more minutely exact. We may well hope for it, then, **by** (*i.e.* "through") **Christ.**

10. And through Christ's death; a doctrine merely hinted here, yet firmly grasped. See *Intro.* p. 5. **wake or sleep.** No moral meaning here! The Apostle's thought leaps back to the introduction of this subject. Whether alive or physically dead at the date of the Advent, we shall *thenceforth* share a blessed life with Christ. The Apostle is not speaking of the state of Christians *before* the Advent. He does not call the condition of the Christian dead life, but sleep. Nor until later does he speak of them (2 Cor. v. 8; Phil. i. 23) as "with Christ." Also, living Christians before the Advent, whatever their privileges, are "absent from the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 6). St. Paul still thinks of the Advent as very near, and tends to ignore the problem of what many now term "the intermediate state." The *dead* Christian shall share *all the blessings* of Christ's return—that is his message.

11. **comfort.** Better here, perhaps, than "exhort" (R.V.). See iii. 2. **edify.** "build up"; not merely in pleasant feelings—our danger is to think too much of these—but in a right life. See 1 Cor. iii. 9, viii. 1, etc. etc. **even as . . . ye do.** Praise again!

I Thess. v. 12-24.

## GENERAL ADMONITIONS.

12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish  
 13 you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their  
 14 work's sake. And be at peace among ourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all  
 15 men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves,  
 16 and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing.  
 17 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in  
 18 Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit.  
 19 Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast  
 20 that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.  
 21 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and  
 22 I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be  
 23 preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus  
 24 Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

General admonitions in regard to church life, unity, and zeal, culminating in a prayer, with an expression of confident faith that God will grant it. The church is admonished throughout: not individuals; not even families (as in Ephesians and Colossians).

12. **know.** Recognise or acknowledge. **which labour.** The most gifted members. **are over you.** Introd. p. 14. **admonish you.** These persons take the lead in discipline, and censure moral faults.

13. **for their work's sake.** He does not speak of official dignity!—It must have needed all the early Christian enthusiasm and spirituality to make this very slight organisation do its work. **be at**

**peace.** If there was danger of jealousy towards the more gifted, there was also—inevitably—danger of disobedience among the rank and file.

14. The duty of caring for the church is not confined to the “leading members” of ver. 12. All members are jointly responsible to “admonish,” etc. **we exhort.** Better here than “beseech.” Comp. ii. 11, iii. 2. **warn.** “admonish.” Same word as ver. 12. **disorderly.** Literally, “those who have fallen out of rank.” Overbalanced by excitement? (iv. 11; 2 Thess. iii. 10-12). **comfort.** Modern English, “encourage”; a different Greek word. **feeble-minded.** Rather, “faint-hearted” (R.V.).

15. This, of course, is personal duty (note at head of par.), yet the church is to watch over it. For the advice, comp. Matt. v. 44; Rom. xii. 17, 21. Even the Buddha taught: “Hatred is never brought to an end by hatred. Hatred is brought to an end by love.” **follow.** “follow after”—not as if an *example copied*, but a *treasure sought*. **among yourselves.** “towards one another.” **to all men.** “towards all.” Fellow-Christians have first claim; all have a real claim (Gal. vi. 10).

16. Comp. Phil. iii. 1 (where parallels show that “farewell,” R.V. margin, is a blunder), iv. 4. Paul lays great stress on Christian cheerfulness. It is a duty and a privilege. Christ has bidden us keep a cheerful exterior towards men even at times of self-humiliation before God (Matt. vi. 16-18). Paul thinks of a joyful heart. God may reasonably demand this; He has made it possible (Ps. lxxxiv. 4).

17. **without ceasing.** See i. 3. It is a characteristic petrification of Christianity when



certain Religious Orders keep up worship in relays all day and all night. But we are always to be in the spirit, often in the literal exercise of prayer.

18. **In every thing.** Said perhaps for the sake of variety, instead of repeating "always." The thought is fuller and clearer Eph. v. 20 or Col. iii. 17. Here is the possibility of constant gladness. The thankful heart is cheerful; greed is gloomy (Trench's *Some murmur*). We have always reason to bless God. **this** may refer to three commands; or more probably—it is singular—to the last. God, as well as His servant Paul, desires thankfulness.

19. **Quench not.** The comparison of the Holy Spirit to fire goes back through the Baptist (Matt. iii. 11 and parallels) to Isa. iv. 4. That "thrice holy fire" (*Creator Spirit*) is a cleansing fire. Comp. Isa. vi. 6, 7. At Pentecost, "tongues like as of fire" appeared (Acts ii. 3). **the Spirit.** As source of preternatural gifts; especially the favourite gift of "tongues"—1 Cor. xiv. 2 says "tongues" where xiv. 1 said "spiritual gifts." See also 1 Cor. xiv. 37, 39. Paul says here—Don't suppress these gifts. Though they stand low in the scale, they have their part to play.

20. **Despise not.** This gift there is no question of suppressing! Yet some—enlightened ones?—"despised" it. Again comp. 1 Cor. xiv. 39. **prophecysings.** Not mere predictions, but Christian preaching animated by the immediate presence of God's Spirit.

21. R.V. margin, "Many ancient authorities insert *But*." The sense rather gains by that. We are apt to suppose, in an ignorant reverence for the supernatural, that, once it was recognised as at work, all doubts and tests disappeared. Not so.

The false supernatural might mimic the true. Prophetic messages had to be verified by their contents (1 Cor. xii. 3; 1 John iv. 1)—there was a special gift for “discernings of spirits” (1 Cor. xii. 10). **Prove.** “Test.” **hold fast.** As the result of the test. **good.** Literally “beautiful.” A very characteristic Greek expression. Comp. in N.T. Phil. iv. 8.

22. The counterpart of the last duty. **appearance** should be “form,” as in R.V. It is the technical Greek word rendered by the technical Latin *species*, and that is its meaning here—every “kind.” (Literally “appearance” or “manifestation”—comp. the English adjective “specious”—of a more general type or *genus*. We are to shun all evil; but it is a poor heart that is much afraid of *seeming* evil in a good cause. (And yet comp. 2 Cor. viii. 21.)

23. Except God works with us, the Church’s efforts at improvement will fail. But God is faithful, and **himself** imparts consecration. **God of peace.** A favourite Hebrew phrase (*e.g.* Heb. xiii. 20), as “Peace” is the Hebrew salutation (note on i. 1). **whole . . . preserved.** R.V., “preserved entire” (*i.e.*, literally, “entire in all its parts”). Paul does not pray that God may complete the religious development of the Thessalonians, but that He may keep them complete, body and soul, to meet Christ’s return. **spirit.** Probably here the higher side of *man’s* mental nature, especially as *renewed* by the Spirit of God. **soul** in ancient speech is the lower, half-animal side of the mind. (But it is a mistake to recognise a definite trichotomy of body, soul, and spirit in St. Paul. He uses the words with literary flexibility.) **without blame** (“so as to be blameless in His presence”). Introd. p. 13.

24. God is equal to this task, and **will do it** (*i.e.* preserve His church with unbroken ranks).

1 Thess. v. 25-28.

### CLOSING SALUTATIONS.

25 Brethren, pray for us. Greet all the brethren with an holy  
26 kiss. I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read  
27 unto all the holy brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus  
28 Christ be with you. Amen.

The first epistle unto the Thessalonians was written from Athens.

26. **an holy kiss.** Part of the simple customs of the early Church (Rom. xvi. 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 14). It was one big family. When the members called each other "brother" and "sister," they meant it. But in the nature of things such customs could not long endure.

27. **I.** Perhaps Paul here takes the pen into his own hand. Comp. p. 7. **charge you.** R.V., "adjure you." A direct appeal to God of the nature of a solemn oath (comp. Matt. xxvi. 63). There are to be no inner circles and outer circles in the Thessalonian brotherhood! That danger must have arisen early.

28. See i. 1. Here Paul's closing salutation is simplest: it is fullest 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Heb. xiii. 25 follows his example more briefly, and Rev. xxii. 21 (R.V.) with a difference. Other epistles have similar but modified greetings at the close. **Amen** not in best MSS, nor in R.V.

The postscripts to epistles are late and of no authority. **from Athens** here is a blunder (iii. 1, 6; Acts xviii. 1, 5).

## 2 Thess. i. 1, 2.

## GREETING.

Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus  
2 Christ : Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Almost *verbatim* as at 1 Thess. i. 1 (which see), except that here the closing words are unquestionably part of St. Paul's genuine text.

## 2 Thess. i. 3-10.

## THANKSGIVING AND HOPE.

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other  
4 aboundeth ; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your  
5 persecutions and tribulations that ye endure : which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which  
6 ye also suffer : seeing it is a righteous thing with God to  
7 recompense tribulation to them that trouble you ; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,  
8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ :  
9 who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power ;  
10 when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

Thanksgiving for the steadfastness of the Thessalonians amid suffering, and for the good hope it affords that they are to share in salvation at Christ's return to judge His enemies and bless His own. Persecution had grown keener, and, as a natural result, the Christians had been thinking more of future blessings (chap. ii.). Paul is to admonish them regarding dangers in that connection, but he begins by reiterating his own fervent acceptance of the same great hope. The cento of O.T. phrases at vers. 8-10 should be noted; also the repetition of watchwords from the First Epistle—"constant thanks" for the Thessalonians, "faith," "love," "patience," "affliction."

3. **We are bound.** The feeling of joy is perhaps slightly less fresh than in 1 Thessalonians. It is his "duty" to praise God. **charity.** "love."

4. **glory.** "boast," or "exult." **persecutions.** Egged on by Jews (1 Thess. ii. 14-16). **tribulation.** R.V., "afflictions." 1 Thess. i. 8, Paul did not need to report to the other churches about Thessalonica—rumour anticipated him. Yet naturally he *did* report it. Language like 2 Cor. viii. 1 had been used much earlier, and of other virtues besides liberality.

5. **a manifest token.** Patience in suffering is a sign of God's grace, and soon His friendship will be gloriously and terribly made manifest. **that.** R.V., "to the end that." The first clause of ver. 5 is a parenthesis; the words which now follow carry on the thought of ver. 4. Paul triumphs in these patient sufferings, which come in order that they may be judged worthy to share the fast-approaching glory. **kingdom of God.** See on 1 Thess. ii. 12.

6. **seeing.** R.V., "if so be," is more literal, but rather misleads. It is an elegant Greek turn of rhetoric: "if it is—as it is." No shadow of doubt is hinted. **tribulation; trouble.** One Greek word. R.V., "affliction" both times.

7. **mighty angels.** R.V., literally, "angels of his power." A favourite Hebrew form.

8. **in flaming fire** (nearly so) and **vengeance** occur Isa. lxvi. 15. This favours A.V.'s punctuation rather than that of R.V. **that know not God,** i.e. "the heathen," as at Ps. lxxix. 6 or Jer. x. 25. (See 1 Thess. iv. 5.) Paul modifies what, according to Hebrew parallelism, might seem a second description of the same class. Those who **obey not the gospel** are here unquestionably the unbelieving Jews (1 Thess. ii. 15, 16). Of course the *principle* applies to *all* who know the gospel yet do not believe on Christ. **obey.** Faith itself is the supreme fulfilment of God's will.

9. **be punished with.** R.V., more literally, "suffer punishment, even." **everlasting.** R.V., "eternal." The word—literally "age long"—does not originally imply endless time; but it is hard to suppose that it does not here include the ideas of endlessness and finality. **from the presence . . . power** (not the same Greek word as in ver. 7). From Isa. ii. 10, 19, 21, nearly as in LXX.

10. **to be glorified.** From Isa. xlix. 3. **admired** and **in his saints.** From the LXX of Ps. lxviii. 35. "Admired"—used by older English in the original Latin sense of "wonder"—becomes "marvelled at" in R.V.; "saints" here—note on 1 Thess. iii. 13—must be believers, not angels. **believe.** R.V., "believed"; a slight change, following the best



MSS. **in that day.** From Isa. ii. 17. "That day," O.T. or N.T., means "the day of the Lord": *e.g.*, Isa. ii. 11; 2 Tim. i. 18. See on 1 Thess. v. 2, (4). A.V. and R.V. are right in making the previous words a parenthesis. The Thessalonians have their share in this wonderful glory; *they too believed.*

2 Thess. i. 11, 12.

**THANKSGIVING PASSING INTO PRAYER**  
(Intro. p. 10).

- 11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with  
12 power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**11. count you worthy.** Well begun is only half done. Not without God's continual grace can the Christian finish his course in triumph. **all the good pleasure of his goodness.** R.V. understands differently: "every desire of goodness," or "good desire," on the part of the Thessalonians. **work of faith.** What was spoken of 1 Thess. i. 3 as the Thessalonians' doing is here carried straight back to the fountain of all goodness. When He works, the work goes **with power.**

**12. name of the Lord . . . glorified** is from Isa. lxvi. 5; **glorified in you**, Isa. xlix. 3. Christians are the true Israel, and even, in dependence on Christ, the true "Servant of Jehovah" (Isa. xlii. 1, etc. etc.). **ye in him.** Our dependence is on Christ as well as (ver. 11) on God. *On God in Christ.*

## 2 Thess. ii. 1-12.

THE APOCALYPSE OF ANTICHRIST—  
THE KERNEL OF THE EPISTLE.

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,  
2 that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the  
3 day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means : for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the  
4 son of perdition ; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing him-  
5 self that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was  
6 yet with you, I told you these things ? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.  
7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work : only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.  
8 and then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy  
9 with the brightness of his coming : even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and  
10 signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish ; because they received  
11 not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion,  
12 that they should believe a lie : that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The Thessalonians commit a sheer blunder if they think that the Second Advent is actually upon them. Other events must happen first, notably a great development of sin. Paul had taught this

already. He now describes even more clearly the personal enemy of Christ, the individual head of the kingdom of evil, doomed to destruction by Christ Himself. (Introd. pp. 15, etc.).

1. **by.** This translation ("Since the hope is so sacred, take care to understand it rightly") is not warranted. "Touching" or "concerning" or "as regards." **our gathering together.** All as described 1 Thess. iv. 16-18.

2. **that.** R.V., "to the end that," is more literal. Purpose, not purport. Note on 1 Thess. ii. 12. **shaken,** etc. Even in the early Church excitement at the thought of the returning Christ might blend with terror. Much more so—far too much so—in later times, as in the sombre *Dies iræ*. **in mind.** Better, "from your mind" (R.V.), their wonted mood and belief. **neither.** The Greek language allows Paul to heap up every possible negative. Nothing whatsoever is to win a hearing for the false opinion. **spirit.** Inspired or enthusiastic messages. Even such needed to be tested (1 Thess. v. 19, 21, and notes). If any one has said so "in the spirit," it is a delusion. **word.** Though not grammatically necessary, it is possible to connect with "by us." And that makes the best sense (comp. also ver. 15). Has it been reported that Paul taught so? It is a blunder. **letter.** Hardly a forged epistle, under Paul's name, known to exist; Paul must have denounced such a document more vehemently. Yet hardly a forged epistle, barely conjectured as possible in the abstract. See Introd. p. 16. **at hand.** "now present." Paul never repudiated the doctrine that "the Lord was at hand" (Phil. iv. 5). What he has to repudiate is the idea that "the fashion of this world" (1 Cor. vii. 31) is already

to break down with devout Christians. No. Life must go on!

3. R.V., "*the falling away*": something which Paul had bidden them expect. The Jews' renunciation of Jehovah? (Introd. p. 18). **that man.** "**the man.**" **sin.** R.V. margin, "lawlessness," is in good MSS, and gives the same word as at vers. 7, 8. If Paul is speaking of Jews, who boasted of the Law (Rom. ii. 17, etc.), what a keen thrust—their doom to open lawlessness, and consequent destruction! **man of sin, son of perdition** (used of Judas, John xvii. 12), are both Hebrew idioms; supremely sinful—doomed.

4. Compare Dan. xi. 36; one of the first descriptions of God's daring rival or the Antichrist (see p. 11 n.). Critics believe that God's enemy in Daniel is drawn partly from the persecuting King Antiochus Epiphanes. **above.** R.V., "against." Either translation is possible, and each yields a good sense. The context in Dan. xi. 36—here quoted—makes "above" the likelier. (The mere *word* in Hebrew is as ambiguous as in Greek.) **[He] as God.** Last two words not in best MSS, and so not in R.V. No difference in meaning; see end of verse. **the temple.** Probably the Temple at Jerusalem. If so, a strong argument that the epistle was written early (and therefore by Paul himself)—the Temple is still standing!—The word means the Temple shrine itself, not the whole area including the courts. If Paul expected the Jews to manifest their hatred of God openly, he would naturally place the outrage in the Temple itself. **shewing himself that he is God.** Not offering proofs or arguments, but exhibiting himself "as God"; compare R.V. This feature in Paul's

portrait of Antichrist was probably suggested by a recent episode. The Emperor Caligula had required the Jews to place his statue in the Temple. He died before matters were pushed to an extreme. (Finely described in Mrs. Charles's *Victory of the Vanquished*.) What one bad or insane man had tried, Paul expects the worst of men to carry through, with even heightened blasphemy.

6. **what withholdeth.** R.V., "that which restraineth." Neuter. According to tradition, the Roman Empire; compare what Paul says of it in Rom. xiii., and recall its repeated protection of him, Acts (xiii. 7-12, xvi. 35-39) xviii. 12-17, etc. (Introd. p. 18). **that.** R.V., more clearly, "to the end that." **revealed.** Evil must have its "apocalyse"—such is the Greek word—at the **time** (R.V. "season," 1 Thess. v. 1 and note there) God has appointed; not sooner.

7. **mystery.** The forces of evil, in this its most awful form, are already at work, unperceived. This is the Bible sense of "mystery"—something *not yet* revealed (Col. i. 26). We may have good reason for holding that things, in part revealed, still shade away into mystery; only, that is not the Bible sense of the word. **iniquity.** "lawlessness." See on ver. 3. **he that letteth will let.** R.V., "there is one that restraineth now," using the same English word (restrain) for the same Greek as in ver. 6. Masculine, now; the Emperor, as head of the Roman Empire? Paul can only hint at the fall of the Empire (Introd. p. 18).

8. **that Wicked.** "the lawless one." **the Lord.** Jesus. R.V., with some good MSS, has



"the Lord Jesus." No less power can put down Antichrist. **consume.** R.V. and best MSS, "slay," as at Isa. xi. 4, which is here quoted. Christ needs not to fight. His mere presence blasts the enemy. **spirit.** "breath" is the right translation here (Isa. xi. 4). **brightness.** "manifestation," Greek "Epiphany." We ordinarily speak of the epiphany of Christ at His first coming; Paul speaks of it here at His second.

9. **him.** Like "whom" (ver. 8). Mod. English, "he." **coming.** Antichrist too has his "Parousia" (literally "presence," N.T. word for the Second Advent; 1 Thess. ii. 19) as well as his "Apocalypse" (ver. 6). **after.** "according to." **power . signs . wonders.** The three N.T. words for what we call miracles. All kinds of miracles are liable, therefore, to be copied by sin, not necessarily by trickery, but by a debased supernaturalism enslaved to the devil's **lying** and opposed to God's truth.

10. **deceivableness.** An Old English word really meaning "deceit." **in them.** R.V.'s "for them" is a slight difference of reading; sense unchanged. **perish.** R.V., more exactly, "are perishing." Comp. 2 Cor. ii. 15. They might—they may—still be saved! **love of the truth** must itself be a spiritual acquirement, a gift from God. Yet it is by *wilful* rejection of it that men perish (ver. 12).

11. **shall send.** R.V., following a different reading, "sendeth." Meaning is scarcely affected. **strong delusion.** R.V., more literally, "a working of error." In the final stage of obduracy men are convinced of the truth of their bad doctrine and of the falseness of Christ's teaching. This is God's doom upon them.



12. But their destruction began in their "taking pleasure" in unrighteousness. **damned.** Literally, as R.V., "judged." The meaning is "condemned," which is the proper meaning of the word "damn" itself, so lovelessly and godlessly used in profane swearing.

(This dramatic catastrophe has never taken place as Paul sketches it. But the struggle between Christ and sin still rages, even within ourselves. Introd. pp. 16, 17.)

2 Thess. ii. 13-15.

### EXHORTATION TO CONSTANCY AND WATCHFULNESS.

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of  
14 the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our  
15 Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

With relief he turns from this vision of wickedness to his, and God's, beloved ones, urging them to constancy and watchfulness.

13. **beloved of the Lord.** From the blessing of Benjamin (Deut. xxxiii. 12). Comp. also 1 Thess. i. 4 (R.V.). **Hath chosen.** 1 Thess. i. 4 and note. **from the beginning.** Comp. Matt. xxv. 34, and contrast John viii. 44. **through sanctification.** "in sanctification"; their consecrated lives proving that God had chosen them.

15. **traditions.** We Protestants dislike that

word, because we associate it with imaginary Church traditions outside the Bible. Here Paul uses it of the teaching of revelation whether verbal—comp. ver. 2—or getting reduced to writing in “epistles.” That teaching will not merely ward off mistakes which generate dangerous excitement; it will save from the deadly delusions which are competing for men’s adherence. **our epistle.** “epistle of ours”—any genuine Pauline letter.

2 Thess. ii. 16-17.

#### A WARM-HEARTED PRAYER.

16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

16. **himself.** Very emphatic in Greek. **everlasting consolation.** R.V., “eternal comfort.” One of the special themes of 1 Thess. (iv. 13-18).

2 Thess. iii. 1-5.

#### REQUEST FOR PRAYERS OF, AND PRAYER FOR HIS CONVERTS.

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith. But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you,

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that ye both do and will do the things which we command  
5 you. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of  
God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

Lastly—as he means for the moment—he begs for *their* prayers; that his work may prosper elsewhere, unhindered by enemies; and utters hopes on their behalf, with prayers that God may be with them to the end. Comp. 1 Thess. iv. 1, 2, v. 23–25.

1. **have free course.** A good paraphrase. R.V., literally, “run.” Ps. cxlvii. 15 speaks of God’s commands to nature; Paul desires the same swift success for the message of grace. **with you.** The triumphs of grace at Thessalonica were conspicuous.

2. In contrast, unhappily, the gospel has its failures. There are senseless, bad, unbelieving hearts, notably of course among Jews. **wicked.** R.V., “evil” (same word as in ver. 3).

3. Counter contrast: God is always faithful. (He means directly the Father, not specially Christ. Comp. 1 Cor. i. 9, x. 13; 2 Cor. i. 18. So also probably 1 Thess. v. 24. See Intro. p. 19.) **evil.** R.V., the “evil one,” according to the steady policy which put “Diabolus into the Lord’s Prayer” (Abp. Tait). Doubtful there, and here. The great personal head of evil in this apocalyptic epistle is the “man” of lawlessness or the “lawless” one. And in the present passage unbelieving men are in full view (ver. 2).

4. Another safeguard: Paul’s teaching, and their regard for it. **have confidence.** One word in Greek (“trust,” but “trust” would be too weak a translation), the same root as

“faith” ver. 2 and “faithful” ver. 3. So he still carries on the same thought. This confidence of his is religious. It is **in the Lord** that he is sure of their loyalty.

5. Hence the crowning safeguard is God’s care of their hearts. **the Lord.** “God.” In this epistle, when he means Jesus by “Lord,” he says “Lord Jesus.” See i. 7 and the correct text of ii. 8; also Introd. p. 19. **love of God.** Probably, love to God (not God’s love towards them). This love will “labour” (1 Thess. i. 3). **patient waiting for Christ.** Probably a good paraphrase. R.V., literally, “patience of Christ.” It would be interesting if we could take this as one of the “surprisingly few N.T. passages which speak of Christ’s example”—patience, like Christ’s. But the *returning* Christ is the great theme in this epistle. Comp., too, Rom. viii. 25 or 1 Thess. i. 3. He might have written “the hope of Christ,” but his special care just now is that their hope be genuine, working, wise, patient hope, not flighty. So he writes “patience of Christ.”—This verse is another collect-like prayer.

### 2 Thess. iii. 6-15.

#### A SORT OF BEGINNING OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which  
7 he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among  
8 you; neither did we eat any man’s bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we

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9 might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto  
 10 you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither  
 11 should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are  
 12 busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they  
 13 work, and eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not  
 14 weary in well doing. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with  
 15 him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

An afterthought (comp. ver. 1). Idleness—probably due to religious excitement at the thought of the Advent, chap. ii.—may need sharper treatment. Paul dwells (in this passage only) upon his own manual labour as an example of *industry*, commands all to be busy, and recalls former exhortations; orders a cessation of intercourse if any still prove contumacious; but asks that everything be said and done, manifestly, in a loving spirit. Comp., with vers. 6–12, 1 Thess. iv. 1, 2, 10, 11. Other references are noted below.

6. **we command.** A further explicit use of his authority; comp. ver. 4. **in the name of.** By authority of Christ, as His representative. Paul himself? 1 Thess. iii. 1. **tradition.** Note on ii. 15.

7. **follow.** “imitate.” 1 Thess. i. 6 (of Christian faith and life); also (of self-sacrifice) 1 Cor. xi. 1.

8. **any man's.** More literally, “bread from any man.” **wrought.** R.V., “working.” A different reading. No difference in sense. **night and day.** Comp. 1 Thess. ii. 9. **be chargeable.** See on 1 Thess. ii. 9.

9. **the power.** R.V. better, "the right." Compare 1 Cor. ix. 4-12. **to follow.** "that ye should imitate." See on ver. 7.

10. **when we were with you.** Comp. 1 Thess. iii. 4. **this,** *i.e.* the commandment which follows. (R.V. reproduces the Greek idiom more nearly.)

11. **walk.** Note on 1 Thess. ii. 12. **busybodies.** In Greek, a compound from the verb "to work." We might render "who do no honest business, but are busybodies."

12. A last warning to these unstable souls, before the church members cut them off. **by.** R.V., "in," a different and better reading. **quietness.** Quiet work is a diviner grace than lazy quiet.

13. **ye.** The rest; the church as a whole, contrasted with the idle fanatics. **well doing.** The "cheerful godliness" on "life's common way" which Wordsworth describes in his sonnet on Milton. So also Gal. vi. 9; it is Gal. vi. 10, with a slight change of word, that dwells on the special virtue of beneficence.

14. The grave sentence.

15. Yet reclamation is the one great end of church discipline (Matt. xviii. 15-17; even, in an extreme case, 1 Cor. v. 5). **admonish.** As at 1 Thess. v. 14 (same Greek. Uniform rendering in R.V.).

## 2 Thess. iii. 16-18.

### CLOSING PRAYERS AND SALUTATIONS.

16 Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by  
17 all means. The Lord be with you all. The salutation of  
Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every



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18 epistle: so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

The second epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Athens.

16. **Lord of peace.** "God." Comp. 1 Thess. v. 23. **give you peace.** The true rest of spirit; better far than fanatical idleness. **by all means.** "in all ways." Keeping the whole church loyal—no excommunications necessary? **you all** might support that view. (Another "collect" verse.)

17. Reverting to the fear that forged epistles may be circulating. See on ii. 1.

18. **all.** The only word added to the closing salutation in 1 Thessalonians. See on ver. 16. **Amen** is again a late addition. (Properly it is not the man praying, but those who make the prayer their own, that should say "Amen.")

Postscript: see end of 1 Thessalonians. **from Athens** here again is a blunder.

1 Cor. i. 1-3.

OPENING SALUTATION.

Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will  
2 of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of  
God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in  
Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place  
call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's  
3 and our's: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our  
Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

This full and rich opening salutation should be compared with the briefer forms in 1 and 2 Thessalonians (and notes there). *Call* and *holy* are as it were keynotes, along with the alternating references to *God* and *Christ*. Names for Christians should also be noted—*Brother, Church, Saints*, those *calling on the name of the Lord*.

1. **called to be an apostle.** Suggests the covert attacks on St. Paul (ix. 1-3; 2 Cor. x.-xiii.; comp. Gal. i. 1). **Sosthenes.** Probably the ex-ruler of the synagogue (Acts xviii. 17). He joins in salutations, and may have been amanuensis. But the letter is Paul's; it is "I," "me," throughout—not even a literary "we."

2. **church.** Literally those "called" or "summoned" to the Assembly; but the root of the word may not have been in men's minds. See on 1 Thess. i. 1. **sanctified.** Consecrated,

made holy. **called to be saints.** A few are called to be apostles ; all are called to serve God and so to be His or to be "holy"—same word, though sometimes we use the Latin form (saint). **with all,** etc. Very often understood of "all the Christians in Achaia" (2 Cor. i. 1). Does he not say much more than that? Might we not take it as a further definition of Christian consecration and calling? Not that Paul salutes all Christians everywhere, but reminds those at Corinth how they share with all Christians everywhere one calling and hope. **both their's and our's.** The Greek expresses no substantive, and some doubt has been raised what word we should supply. But probably "Lord" is right (R.V. explicitly). Other Christians worship their own Lord—ours too! One fellowship.

1 Cor. i. 4-9.

### THANKSGIVING.

4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of  
 5 God which is given you by Jesus Christ ; that in every  
 thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all  
 6 knowledge ; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed  
 7 in you : so that ye come behind in no gift ; waiting for the  
 8 coming of our Lord Jesus Christ : who shall also confirm  
 you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of  
 9 our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were  
 called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Compare on 1 Thess. i. 2. Thanksgiving for the rich gifts of the church, and their spiritual enlightenment—wonderful things for heathen

converts. But, significantly, nothing is said about love or unity. There they were weaker.

4. **on your behalf.** Not "acting for you," but "concerning you" (R.V.). by. "in."

6. The gospel accredited itself in their own real if one-sided church life.

7. **coming.** Better, "revelation" (R.V.). The burning hope of the Early Church. (This is not the word "Parousia.")

8. Their safeguard—Christ.

9. Their safeguard—God. See on 1 Thess. v. 24.

### 1 Cor. i. 10-17.

#### THE CORINTHIAN PARTIES.

10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you ; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul ; and I of Apollos ; and I of Cephas ; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided ? was Paul crucified for you ? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul ? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius ; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas : besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel : not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Introducing the first great topic—the Corinthian parties, or Wisdom and Folly. They thought them-

selves wise and ripe: they were raw fools—all were more or less so.

10. **the name** sums up the whole of revelation—all Christ's grace, all His glory. **divisions.** Literally "schisms." The church was a unity, but party spirit, the real spirit of evil schism, raged. Separation of denomination from denomination, even if not desirable in itself, need not mean "schism." Union of jealous competing congregations in one organisation is no remedy. But how is such unity possible as Paul demands? Many men, many minds! True, but, abiding in Christ, we shall have all essential spiritual oneness in Him.

11. **house**, or "household," is no doubt correct, though the Greek does not give the word. **Chloe.** A woman's name; Greek. Probably the "household" are slaves, not children—Christian slaves travelling on business. Probably, too, the mistress was Christian. But we cannot tell.

12. **I say.** This is literal. R.V. gives the sense—"I mean." **of Paul.** Some clung, but with too much partisanship, to their founder. **of Apollos.** Lovers of speculation—the Greek weakness (Introd. p. 22). **of Cephas.** Jewish and Judaising Christians (John i. 42; Cephas is Aramaic, Peter the Greek form of Simon's surname). It is tempting to conjecture that Peter had visited Corinth on a missionary journey (ix. 5). But if so, Paul must in fairness have remarked (iii. 6) that Peter also had "watered."—The Jewish leaven is at work; later, it becomes far more threatening (Introd. pp. 25, 30). **and I of Christ.** Perplexing words. (1) It is commonly thought this was "a party against party"

(F.D. Maurice's phrase for the Broad Church), but would such a policy (in the circumstances) be blamed by a Paul? A Maurice might blame it! (2) Baur and others (Introd. p. 33) think they were extremer Judaisers; comp. 2 Cor. x. 7. But if so, Paul must have denounced them more flatly. (3) Some think this is Paul's counter-statement—"But *I am Christ's*."—Of course "But" is as legitimate a rendering as "And."—Must Paul not have put such a statement more clearly? A word or two added would have sufficed. And the question here with Paul is not what he says, but what they say and ought to say. Also the next verse in both its parts is more telling if "Christ" has not just been named. (4) With hesitation, then, one infers this to be an early gloss written on the margin—borrowed perhaps from iii. 23.

**13. Is Christ divided?** Even more forcible in the rendering of R.V. margin, "Christ is divided." He is being torn in pieces by the factious! Paul must first show the cleanness of his own hands. He sanctions no party; claims no sectarian allegiance. In the best of Apostles there is nothing like (*a*) the Redeemer's death or (*b*) the baptismal covenant. **baptized.** For a convert from heathenism, baptism is the solemn and formal decision for Christ. **in the name.** R.V., literally, "into the name"; perhaps, entering into a mystic relation with the person named. That is possible with Jesus, and in a sense under the O.T. with Moses (x. 2); not with Paul. Comp. ver. 10 and note there.

**14. I thank God.** He is "thankful" now, in the knowledge of their partisanship (ver. 15), that he had so seldom baptized with his own hands.



**Crispus.** Acts xviii. 8. **Gaius** (or Caius) was as common a Latin name as William is an English ; so the different N.T. "Gaiuses" must not be identified with each other.

16. **household.** Here (not ver. 11) the word stands in the Greek ; literally "house." It might include wife, children, slaves ; and in this case unquestionably includes the head himself (xvi. 15, 17).

17. **For.** Either (1) "Don't wonder if I forget my baptisms." Or better (2) "Don't wonder if I attach little importance to baptism." This sweeps away all superstitious ideas of the value of the mere outward ordinance. Could Paul ever speak in such terms of the gospel ? Or of the Cross ? **not with wisdom of words.** But there is a further danger. One may preach rather than ply sacraments, yet not preach Christ. False wisdom, appealing to human intelligence, or conceit, makes the cross **of none effect** (R.V. "void"). If fine talk could save, nothing would remain to be done by Christ's agony and sacrifice.

#### 1 Cor. i. 18-25.

#### THE POWER AND WISDOM OF THE CROSS.

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness ; but unto us which are saved it is the power of  
 19 God. For it is written, *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the*  
 20 *prudent.* Where is the wise ? where is the scribe ? where is the disputer of this world ? hath not God made foolish  
 21 the wisdom of this world ? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after  
 23 wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews  
 24 a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but  
 unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ  
 25 the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the  
 foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of  
 God is stronger than men.

Baptism being eliminated, and the ground so far cleared, we face the central fact of Christianity. Is the Cross wise or foolish, strong or weak? It is a simple thing to tell men of, no doubt, but all the mystery of our salvation is wrapped up in it, and all the magnetism which turns men into saints, heroes, martyrs. Alas for those who never see this!

18. **preaching.** R.V., more literally, "word"; the *message*. **perish.** "are perishing." Still time for turning back, if they will even yet hear! **are saved.** Similarly, "are being saved." There is still danger—of utter ruin—for us, if we are slack. **power.** See ver. 24.

19. Isa. xxix. 14, almost exactly as in the LXX.

20. Echoes of Isa. xix. 11 and (as in LXX; noting also R.V. margin) of Isa. xxxiii. 18. **the wise** and **the scribe** are Jewish figures. The Proverbs were spoken by "the wise" (Prov. xxii. 17, xxiv. 23). With Job, Ecclesiastes, and some Psalms, we still call Proverbs "Wisdom literature." "Scribes," of course, were students of scriptural and traditional law. **the disputer**, etc., is the Greek or Gentile sage. **this world** must be contrasted with the "world to come," in the light of Isa. lxv. 17, lxvi. 22, and the Jewish theology built upon these passages. (Literally, "age." See ii. 7, 8, and note there.)

21. **after that.** R.V. better, "seeing that." **by wisdom.** R.V., "by its wisdom"; literally "by the wisdom" (it had). Bad wisdom is condemned, not all wisdom. God Himself is supremely wise in His ways, though men are slow to think so. **knew not God.** Comp. especially Rom. i. To St. Paul it is plain that Godless and Christless civilisation is bankrupt. **foolishness of preaching.** R.V., "of the preaching"; R.V. margin, "of the thing preached." Paul is offering no apology for silly sermons. The very substance of the gospel is called folly by blinded men. But its simplicity is seen in its true glory by those who **believe.**

22. **a sign** (R.V. reads "signs"). One name for "miracle" (2 Thess. ii. 9 and note). The Jews' weakness was for supernatural works of power; there was even risk of their despising genuine miracles if unostentatious (Matt. xvi. 1). **wisdom.** The Gentile and especially Greek weakness.

23. **Christ crucified.** It is tempting to translate "a crucified Messiah"; but probably "Christ" was already a proper name with St. Paul (on 1 Thess. i. 1). **stumblingblock.** The word often rendered "offence." Literally "scandal." The opposite of a miracle or aid to faith—a difficulty. Who is to believe in a crucified malefactor? say the Jews. **foolishness.** Opposite of wisdom.

24. **called.** By God, and so saved. See i. 1, 2; also 1 Thess. ii. 12. **power.** Not in spite of the Cross, but because of it. In that dying weakness is all omnipotence. Enlightenment is blind; faith sees.

25. God when He is foolish—or when He is weak! Irony could go no farther.

I Cor. i. 26-31.

## THE CALLED OF GOD.

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are  
 27 called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are  
 28 mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are  
 29 not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh  
 30 should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteous-  
 31 ness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, *He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

Experience confirms this: Christians are not made out of great or wise men, but the contrary. Why? That God's glory may all the more shine forth, undimmed, unrivalled! Comp. Isa. ii. 11-17. The same thoughts with more tenderness in Christ's words, Matt. xi. 25-30.

26. **ye see.** R.V. margin's is the more probable translation: "Behold," imperative. He appeals to experience, but tells them they must study it as they have never yet done. **your calling.** What sort of persons are "called"? **noble.** Literally "well-born."—All these were unwelcome sayings to pride.

27. **Folly,** with God, can defeat all wisdom without Him; and weakness, all strength.

28. **base things.** People with no blue blood; opposite to the "noble" (ver. 26), with the hint which language always gives that "villains" or

"cads" are despicable. **which are not.** Men "of no account" (2 Cor. x. 10, R.V.). **to bring to nought.** Cromwell at Naseby "smiled out to God" in confidence at the thought of this promise: and, he adds, "God did it."

29. Why? To glorify the democracy? No; to silence man and glorify God. Yet God is not a harsh power crushing us; we are His own through Christ (next verse).

30. **made . . . wisdom.** There is true wisdom in Christ; that we may know this, God must work directly on ourselves. **righteousness.** Here, the gift of forgiveness through Christ. **sanctification.** Consecration to be God's, through Christ. **redemption.** Deliverance from all bondage to sin.

31. Jer. ix. 23, 24. We may not glory or boast *before* God; but we may do so *in* God (Ps. xxxiv. 2).

#### 1 Cor. ii. 1-5.

#### THE CHARACTER OF PAUL'S TEACHING.

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the  
 2 testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.  
 3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much  
 4 trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration  
 5 of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Paul's simple teaching at Corinth had been deliberate, and a matter of principle, designed to



let God work and to glorify Him. It has been conjectured that Paul's ill success at Athens (Acts xvii. 18-34) induced him at Corinth to avoid more resolutely than ever the philosophical vein he tried once to work on Mars' Hill. (Comp. p. 22.)

1. **testimony** (found again in R.V. margin) is a better reading than "mystery" (R.V.).

3. A weak person, delivering a weak message.

4. But divine *power* worked in him—spiritual power: in miracle and inspiration, no doubt, but also in appeal to the conscience and in the powers of the new life. **enticing**, or "persuasive."

5. Deliberate purpose and choice—by Paul? Or perhaps by God through him. **stand** (A.V. and R.V.) is a very good paraphrase. Literally "be."

### I Cor. ii. 6-16.

#### THERE IS A HIGHER CHRISTIAN WISDOM.

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect :  
yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this  
7 world, that come to nought : but we speak the wisdom  
of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God  
8 ordained before the world unto our glory : which none  
of the princes of this world knew : for had they known it,  
9 they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as  
it is written, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither*  
*have entered into the heart of man, the things which God*  
10 *hath prepared for them that love him.* But God hath  
revealed them unto us by his Spirit : for the Spirit  
11 searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For  
what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of  
man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth  
12 no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received,



not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God ;  
 that we might know the things that are freely given to us  
 13 of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words  
 which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost  
 14 teacheth ; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But  
 the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of  
 God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he  
 15 know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But  
 he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is  
 16 judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the  
 Lord, that he may instruct him ? But we have the mind  
 of Christ.

There is, however, a higher Christian wisdom, wholly supernatural, and Paul teaches it wherever he can. But to the worldly wise it is darkness ; else Christ would never have been crucified. Those who slew Him were in the dark—we are in the light. How dare other children of darkness pretend to sit in judgment on God's spiritual revelation, or on His spiritual servants ?

6. **perfect.** "full grown" (as at Heb. v. 14). There is perhaps also a reference to the Greek mysteries, with their innermost circle of those "perfectly" initiated. **princes.** R.V., "rulers," is more literal, and is the usual translation of the Greek word in A.V. and R.V. But R.V. has not always used it ; *e.g.*, it still translates "the *prince* of this world cometh" (John xiv. 30). (1) Most simply understood of "Herod and Pontius Pilate" or the "rulers" of Israel (Acts iii. 17, iv. 26, 27) ; but why should any one expect supernatural wisdom in these persons ? (2) Paul may be describing imperfect angel rulers of this world : comp. Job iv. 18 ; Heb. ii. 5 (angels rule *this* world !), and especially Col. ii. 15. It is not impossible

that he may think of these as the real instigators of the Crucifixion (ver. 8), so marvellously over-ruled by God. **that come to nought.** R.V., "are coming"; the process is not yet complete. Any power, however great, that opposes God does so to its ruin.

**7. in a mystery.** Newly revealed (note on 1 Thess. ii. 7); revealed to faith. **the hidden wisdom.** God's hidden purpose. **world.** R.V., "worlds," is more exact. Original meaning "ages," but the word passes over readily from time to space. **glory.** The final heavenly brightness, which God's mercy destines for us.

**8. Lord of glory.** Significantly named. Christ came from that bright sphere; and He rules it.

**9. it is written.** Perhaps from Isa. lxiv. 4, which is tolerably similar; although learned Fathers (Origen, Jerome) say that the quotation is from a lost apocryphal *Apocalypse of Elias*. **Eye hath not seen.** R.V., more exactly, "Things which eye saw not," etc. Paul quotes a mere fragment. But the meaning is plain—Revelation is beyond man's power to divine. **which God hath prepared.** These things must *include* heavenly glory; the ordinary application of the words may not be far wrong. Yet the things are already revealed (vers. 10, 13).

**10. by his Spirit.** As the source of moral renewal and intelligent faith; perhaps also as source of the miraculous "gifts." Christian *prophets* may have spoken of the wonders of heaven.

**11. We are made sharers in God's own self-consciousness** (ver. 12). **no man.** R.V., "none," a much needed improvement, here and elsewhere.

12. **we have received.** "we received" (when we believed). **of God.** "by God."

13. **Holy Ghost.** R.V., "the Spirit," following MSS which do not give the epithet "Holy" here, and keeping the translation "Spirit" uniformly. **teacheth.** In inward enlightenment; possibly also in wonderful "tongues." **comparing spiritual things . . .** The clearest sense is found in R.V. margin: "interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men."

14. **natural.** Literally "psychic"; from the root of our word "psychology" or "psychical." Contrasted with "pneumatic" or spiritual. In O.T. "soul [the word rendered in Greek by *psyche*] is prominently associated with created man, and Spirit with the creating God." This helps to explain N.T. usage of "spiritual" for the Christian and "psychic" for the unconverted. **discerned.** R.V., "judged,"—for uniformity. Matters of spiritual judgment.

16. The question is quoted from Isa. xl. 13. The answer is new. Yes, indeed; *we* [very emphatic] know! For we partake God's self-consciousness through Christ (vers. 11, 12). The LXX wrote "mind" in Isa. xl. 13. Paul follows them. He treats "mind" and "spirit" as synonyms. Also what the O.T. said of Jehovah—the *Lord*, as the Jews read the word—Paul quotes of our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. iii. 1-4.

### SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY OF READERS.

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual,  
2 but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have

fed you with milk, and not with meat : for hitherto ye were  
 3 not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye  
 are yet carnal : for whereas there is among you envying,  
 and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as  
 4 men? For while one saith, I am of Paul ; and another,  
 I am of Apollos ; are ye not carnal ?

Why had Paul never initiated them into his own superior secret wisdom? Because of their spiritual unripeness. They were incapable of it! Alas, they are so still! Their party-spirit proves this conclusively.

1. **carnal.** A softened expression, not placing them with the ungodly, but indicating the taint of worldliness in these spiritual babes.

3. Here he uses the stronger word for **carnal**, growing warmer as he goes on. **walk.** Note on 1 Thess. ii. 12. **as men**, *i.e.* "after the manner of men" (R.V.). Comp. Matt. xvi. 23, contrasting ver. 17 there.

4. **carnal.** Better reading, "men," Again the emphasis grows stronger. What they ought to be is sons of God.

### I Cor. iii. 5-15.

#### DIVINE JUDGMENT ON HUMAN TEACHERS.

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by  
 whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?  
 6 I have planted, Apollos watered ; but God gave the increase.  
 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he  
 8 that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase. Now he  
 that planteth and he that watereth are one : and every man  
 shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.  
 9 For we are labourers together with God : ye are God's

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- 10 husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.
- 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid,  
 12 which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ;  
 13 every man's work shall be made manifest : for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire ; and  
 14 the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he  
 15 shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire.

True wisdom looks past human leaders to God and Christ. The leaders are fallible men, and must come up for judgment themselves on the awful day of final account. Then sentence will pass swift and resistless upon bad work done by good men.

5. **Who.** R.V., "What," is better supported and yields better sense. *Who* were Paul, etc.? Servants of God, deserving all honour! *What* were they apart from God? Nothing! His mere **ministers** ("servants"). **by.** "through." **each.** This refers to Paul and Apollos. Each did the work God fitted him for; see next verse.

6. **I have planted.** R.V., with almost painful literalness, "I planted,"—once for all in the past. **increase.** The mystery of natural and still more of spiritual growth is in God's sole and safe keeping.

8. **are one.** Literally "one thing." Their life is merged in the larger Christian thought and service which they all share. How silly and insulting to pit them one against another! **every man shall receive.** God does not treat faithful servants as



nothing when it comes to pay-day. As servants, He rewards them lavishly.

**9. together with God.** Christians who are Christians indeed are partners with their Master. **husbandry.** Carrying on the metaphor of ver. 6. If the church is a farm, it is tilled by the Lord God Himself. **building.** A new metaphor, developed in the next verses. If the church is a temple, its builder and maker is God. And except the Lord build this house, they labour in vain that build it.

**10.** Paul recurs to the thought of his own special service. By God's grace, he made a beginning once for all. Others may continue the work well or ill. **masterbuilder** is in Greek "architect," but means, of course, the chief artisan as well as the chief artist.

**11. For,** *i.e.*, probably, "There is no use in talking about any work except that of *building* upon a *foundation*. The real foundation—Christ—was laid once for all by God" (Isa. viii. 14; comp. Rom. ix. 33),—Paul's own work, great as it was, disappearing in the thought of Christ's.

**12. Now.** R.V., more literally, "But." The foundation is laid. *But*, how do we build? Two sets of materials, good and bad—things of **gold**, of **silver**, and **precious**, *i.e.* "costly," **stones**; not gems but marbles and the like, suitable (ver. 16) for a temple. Or bad materials, each worse than the last: **wood, hay, stubble.**

**13. the day.** Of judgment. **it shall be revealed by fire.** R.V., "it is revealed in fire," a more careful and exact translation. Comp. 2 Thess. i. 8. **the fire.** R.V., "the fire itself," following a better reading. It is as if judgment-



day would proclaim its own sentences automatically. The hidden God of righteousness, whom the world has denied and jeered at, will appear in blazing brightness, before which all wickedness and all sham goodness shrivel up. **try.** R.V., "prove." Put to the test.—Of course nothing here is to be understood literally. What is taught is that there will be a real, terrible, searching judgment.

**15. he shall suffer loss.** Seeing his whole life and labour come to nothing; that at least is implied. If there is some further "fine" (such is the literal meaning of the word), we cannot say what it is. The man still **shall be saved. by fire.** R.V. better, "through fire"; as a shipwrecked man (so Bengel) gets to land through the breakers, battered, bruised, terrified, saving only his bare life.

**1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.**

### THE WORSE PERIL.

**16** Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the  
**17** Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

A digression. There are worse faults at Corinth than party-spirit, bad as it is. Thinking of teachers who make shipwreck of their Christian service, Paul fears what shipwrecks may be destined for some Christian readers at Corinth.

**16. the temple.** R.V., more exactly, "a temple." They were not the only church (xiv. 36). **the Spirit.** It is His presence that makes the sins of Christians so exceeding sinful.

17. **defile.** R.V., “destroy,”—more exact, and showing the connection of the two clauses. God will justly destroy these destroyers. **is holy.** It belongs to God Himself. **which temple.** More literally, “and such are ye,”—holy persons, called to be dwellings of God’s Spirit, and to live together in a holy church.

1 Cor. iii. 18-iv. 5.

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST ALONE.

18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you  
seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a  
19 fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world  
is foolishness with God. For it is written, *He taketh*  
20 *the wise in their own craftiness.* And again, *The Lord*  
*knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.*  
21 Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are  
22 your’s ; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world,  
or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ;  
23 all are your’s ; and ye are Christ’s ; and Christ is God’s.  
iv. 1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ,  
2 and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is  
3 required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But  
with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of  
you, or of man’s judgment : yea, I judge not mine own  
4 self. For I know nothing by myself ; yet am I not hereby  
5 justified : but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore  
judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who  
both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and  
will make manifest the counsels of the hearts : and then  
shall every man have praise of God.

They are to be done with their fancied wisdom  
and all their over-estimate of men. They degrade

their own Christian position in making their boast of this or that human teacher. Rather, all aspects of truth, all phases of human experience, are *theirs*! But they are Christ's; and their teachers are Christ's servants—no more than that, and no less. "The Master praises" at the right time. "What are men?" whose praise is an anachronism and an impertinence.

18. All their moral instability is closely connected with a fancied wisdom. **seemeth to be.** R.V. better, "thinketh that he is."

19. **it is written.** Job v. 13—words of Eliphaz, by the way—with some words of v. 12 (in the Greek translation).

20. Ps. xciv. 11.

21. This splendid passage should be compared with a similar text, Rom. viii. 38, 39. But the present verse goes even farther. Not merely do none of these things harm the Christian; they all (even death) help him.

22. **things to come.** The hereafter; the "world to come." But the principle applies also to (1) the remainder of a man's life, (2) coming history. Christianity is the religion of the future.

23. **ye are Christ's.** There is no human priest, not even a human apostle, between the soul and Christ. But the blessed Christ, the one Mediator, stands between us and God. Only as we are His and He God's are we truly God's children.

iv. 1. Great Christian teachers have all their significance from Christ. **account.** See on 2 Cor. iii. 5. **ministers.** A different word from that used at iii. 5. "Subordinates." **stewards** were generally in those days slaves, though trusted slaves. Paul does not hesitate to call himself right out Christ's

“slave,” e.g. Rom. i. 1. He is to *administer* for Christ. **mysteries.** ii. 7; 1 Thess. ii. 7.

2. R.V., following a slightly different reading, inserts “Here”; we might paraphrase, “That being the case.” **Moreover.** “It remains.” The one great requirement, administrative **faithfulness.** Comp. Rom. xiv. 4.

3. **judgment.** Literally “day.” A Corinthian or any human day of judgment is a trifle. God’s day of judgment is the tremendous reality. **I judge not mine own self.** That would be useless. Acquittal by conscience is not a final sentence.

4. **by myself.** “against myself,”—one of R.V.’s greatest improvements. “By” used to be capable of meaning “against,” but suggests that sense to very few readers now. This verse is a noble study of a Christian conscience, with its carefulness, its clean-handedness, and yet its humble and devout submission to the all-seeing Eye.

#### I Cor. iv. 6-13.

#### CONCEIT THE ROOT OF CONTENTION.

- 6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one  
7 against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if  
8 thou hadst not received it? Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.

- 9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as  
 it were appointed to death : for we are made a spectacle  
 10 unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools  
 for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ ; we are weak,  
 but ye are strong ; ye are honourable, but we are despised.  
 11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst,  
 and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain  
 12 dwellingplace ; and labour, working with our own hands :  
 being reviled, we bless ; being persecuted, we suffer it :  
 13 being defamed, we intreat : we are made as the filth  
 of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto  
 this day.

He seems to have been speaking about his own fallibility. He has been thinking, however, of *their* dangers, and trying to teach them unity of spirit, humbleness of mind. At the bottom of their partisanship lies conceit. They will stick to the master mind *they* have picked out. Well ! an apostle's life is such as to drive conceit forcibly away. A Corinthian's life, of course, is a much more splendid affair !

6. **a figure.** An example, or a parable. **transferred.** To whom, it is clear ; but from whom ? (1) Many—from Cephas ; it would not have done to criticise the Peter faction by name. But could he say that he *transferred* that question to himself and Apollos ? Why, they had a leading share in that question from the first, as the Christian teachers who had actually worked and led at Corinth. "Confined" would have been the word, if that was his line. (2) Better, therefore—transferred from the Corinthians. He has talked of apostolic fallibility : he has thought of Corinthian error. **not to think . . .** Literally "the [lesson of :] not above what is written." What can this mean ?



It sounds natural to us, who have a complete Bible, and test everything by its principles. But, in Paul's time, when the N.T. was only beginning to be written, "Scripture" or "what was written" meant the O.T. Paul could not possibly—with Judaisers hovering on the outskirts!—advise men to "keep strictly to the O.T. and be safe." With great regret, one must conclude that the verse is corrupt. We have not got and cannot conjecture what Paul really wrote. **puffed up.** Conceit is the root trouble. **for one.** One teacher. **against another.** Supposed loyalty to one teacher is real contempt towards another; and often this means contempt for Paul, the founder!

7. A fuller (ironical) rebuke to conceit. If they art so fine, who made them so? Why brag?

8. **Now.** R.V., more clearly, "Already." Heaven has begun for these fine fellows. Oh, if it were only true!

9. It is certainly not true of apostles. **set forth.** In an amphitheatre. **us the apostles.** Paul frequently speaks in the stricter sense of "apostles" (ix. 1, ix. 5 R.V., "the rest of the apostles," xv. 7, 9), though elsewhere he uses the word of a wider circle of persons, *e.g.* Rom. xvi. 7. The latter usage is conspicuous in the *Didaché* and elsewhere. **last.** Because Christ has nearly drained the bitter cup (Col. i. 24), and because the end of all things is coming, so Paul expects (*e.g.* 1 Cor. vii. 31, xvi. 22 R.V. and margin), very soon. **as it were . . . death.** Like condemned criminals who have to fight each other, or perhaps to fight beasts (xv. 32). **a spectacle.** Literally "a theatre." An entertainment. "Butchered to make a Roman holiday." **and to angels and to**



**men.** Better, R.V. margin, "both to angels and men." The world, considered as onlookers at the tragic spectacle, is made up of these two great orders of rational beings. Angels, who had a holy curiosity regarding Christ's sufferings (1 Pet. i. 12), are still astonished at the sufferings endured for Christ by His people.

10. The apostles have accepted the Christian's cross, including contempt. The Corinthians have not.

12. It is reported that in India converts prefer to see the missionary driving rather than walking. Corinth might have been more ready to idolise Paul if he had not worked for his bread (see chap. ix.). **we bless.** Good words for bad. **we suffer it.** No acts of retaliation, or even self-defence.

13. **intreat.** Probably not so much "intreat to desist from harming us" as "to accept the gospel," to have mercy on his own persecuting soul. Another interpretation might be "we give comfort." (Consult "comfort" in Index.)

#### 1 Cor. iv. 14-21.

#### PAUL WILL COME TO CORINTH.

14 I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved  
 15 sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand  
 instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in  
 Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.  
 16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.  
 17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is  
 my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring  
 you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as

18 I teach every where in every church. Now some are puffed  
 19 up, as though I would not come to you. But I will come  
 to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the  
 speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.  
 20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.  
 21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in  
 love, and in the spirit of meekness?

In these words, brushing away the party-strife, Paul claims his own peculiar place at Corinth as founder, father, example. His loyal child Timothy is on the way to them, to recall to mind more fully the absent father's teaching. But that does not mean that Paul is afraid to come. He will come when he can. It is for them to say whether he shall come with strict fatherly chastisements or with unshadowed fatherly love.

14. **to shame you.** The voice changes here to gentleness. **I warn you.** R.V., "to admonish you,"—a slight difference of reading along with a slightly better translation.

15. **instructors.** R.V. writes "tutors," as being a more non-committal word. This Greek word, "pedagogue," meant a slave who had charge of the young child (Gal. iii. 24), and perhaps saw him to school. Any service which any Christian teacher could do for the Corinthians was incomparably lower than Paul's service in bringing them the gospel for the first time; though even the lower service may be something—may be **in Christ.**

16. Comp. x. 1. **followers.** "imitators."

17. **faithful** as well as **beloved** belongs to **son** ("child"); see R.V. **ways.** Perhaps a Hebraism. The Rabbis spoke of *Halachoth*—precepts how to

“walk” (as the word means; see 1 Thess. iv. 1). Among Jews, “the Way” (Acts ix. 2, xix. 9, etc. etc.) was a polite non-committal name for Christianity.

18. **puffed up.** Not so much here with conceit as with false confidence: Paul is afraid! Though to be sure only a conceited mind could harbour that thought. Strictly it is “were” puffed up. Probably, when they heard Timothy was coming, not Paul. They must have heard earlier of Paul’s intended visit.

19. **if the Lord will.** Some providence may have hindered his leaving Ephesus so far. Comp. xvi. 7-9.

20. **kingdom of God.** 1 Thess. ii. 12. **in word.** In mere words, such as the prating critics at Corinth had in plenty. **in power.** See ii. 4; also 2 Cor. vi. 7.

#### I Cor. v. 1-8.

#### THE MARRIAGE SCANDAL.

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife.

- 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from
- 3 among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present,
- 4 concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 5 to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not

7 that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is  
 8 sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The "enlightened" Corinthians had tolerated a hateful "marriage." Paul insists on the necessity of excommunicating the offender, and commands them to carry out his further inspired impulse and solemn resolution to hand the man over supernaturally to Satan, considered as the author of disease (comp. 2 Cor. xii. 7), that the flesh which has sinned may suffer even to death, and that the soul who once confessed Christ may by His mercy be rescued and saved. It was unchristian to treat such things as purely individual, to be settled by each man's choice. They spread moral contagion. Christians were pledged by their relation to Christ and enabled through His sacrifice to be done with all defilement in the personal life and in the fellowship.

1. **commonly.** Literally "wholly." A.V. took this as meaning "in all quarters." R.V. represents Greek usage better: "actually." The *whole* of this monstrous report is true! **is not named.** R.V. follows MSS which omit "named." Such immorality does not *occur* in heathenism! **Gentiles.** Paul speaks like a Jew (Gal. ii. 14). The word almost means "heathen"; comp. 1 Cor. xii. 2. There is no difference in Christ between Jew and *Greek* (Rom. x. 12; Gal. iii. 28); but "Gentile" generally—not always—carries this

deep tinge of blame. Mankind has three divisions—(unconverted) Jews, (unconverted) Greeks or Gentiles, and *the church of God* (1 Cor. x. 32). **should have.** R.V. better, “has.” It is a single monstrous case. **his father’s wife.** Introd. pp. 25, 26.

2. **puffed up.** With the thought of their enlightenment and toleration. Comp. iv. 6, 18, 19, viii. 1.

3. **For.** (There is no escape from the painful duty.) “For” Paul has, as if in vision, foreseen and resolved on a yet more terrible sentence, which they are solemnly to pass as a church. **as absent.** “being absent.”

4. **the power . . .** It alone could, but it could, carry out even such sentences. Comp. Acts v.

5. Not suffering but immunity is the sinner’s deadly danger. Suffering may save (xi. 30–32). **in the day,** etc. 1 Thess. v. 2.

6. **glorying.** They “boast” of their liberality—in their conceit (ver. 2). **leaven.** Christ’s parable (Matt. xiii. 33) speaks of contagious goodness, Paul of contagious sin. Both infections are real and strong.

Ver. 7 refers to the duty of the Jews before the days of unleavened bread (Ex. xii. 13), spiritualising it. **old.** Belonging to the old sinful nature. **new.** In Christ Jesus. **lump.** Of paschal bread or biscuit; free from leaven (we use yeast). **as ye are.** “even as.” The Christian is purified: let him be loyal to the great gift of the new life, which is his already. Comp. John xiii. 10, xv. 3, 4 (clearer in R.V.). **our passover.** Ours, as Christians; in contrast to the merely ritual or symbolical ordinance of the Jews. Along

with the unleavened bread went the slaying, roasting, and eating of the paschal lamb.

8. **let us keep the feast.** Some have thought Paul wrote near Easter. That is rather wooden interpretation. Besides, it is doubtful whether a (yearly) Christian Easter was observed in the Pauline churches. Paul is speaking of a lifelong permanent duty. Christianity is to be continual purity, continual joy.

I Cor. v. 9-13.

EXPLANATION OF FORMER LETTER.

9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with  
10 fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of  
this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with  
idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.  
11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if  
any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or  
covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an  
12 extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what  
have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not  
13 ye judge them that are within? But them that are  
without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among  
yourselves that wicked person.

Paul's lost epistle (Introd. pp. 6, 23) had been, perhaps maliciously, taken in an exaggerated sense. He has heard of their difficulties, and defines his real meaning, speaking with grave emphasis.

9. **in an epistle.** "in the epistle." R.V. gives the sense "in my epistle." There had been one epistle to Corinth before "1 Corinthians," and



just one. Grammatically (ver. 11) the words might refer to an earlier passage in 1 Corinthians. But —there is no such passage!

10. **altogether.** R.V. margin is better, “not at all, meaning with the fornicators,” etc. **then must ye needs.** Arguing by a *reductio ad absurdum* or indirect proof. With all his earnestness, Paul teaches a Christianity that is not for monks but for citizens.

11. **now.** It shall be clear now, if it was not so before! **I have written.** R.V., “I write.” That is the meaning of the Greek idiom, the “epistolary aorist.” if . . . **a brother be . . .** Such had some of them been (vi. 9–11); and, alas! relapse was not impossible. **an idolater.** Going to dangerous lengths in connivance at idolatry (viii. 10, x. 14–22). Some things were called idolatry by the scrupulous which Paul does not consider idolatry at all (x. 25).

12. **without.** The non-Christian world outside the Church. **do not ye judge?** It was their own practice to exercise some part of mutual discipline, however slack.

13. **God judgeth.** In the end; and all the more severely (xi. 31, 32). **put away.** This last clause is quoted from Deut. xvii. 7. At once; so the Greek tense implies. **that wicked person.** This particular scandalous sinner (ver. 2). Nothing is said of the lady. Perhaps she is regarded as purely submissive and passive. Or perhaps she was not a Christian.

## I Cor. vi. 1-11.

## THE LAWSUITS AMONG CHRISTIANS.

Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to  
2 law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye  
not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the  
world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the  
3 smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge  
angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?  
4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life,  
set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.  
5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise  
man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge  
6 between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with  
7 brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore  
there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law  
one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong?  
why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?  
8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.  
9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the  
kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators,  
nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers  
10 of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous,  
nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit  
11 the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but  
ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in  
the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Paul has heard with dismay of lawsuits between Christian and Christian in pagan courts of justice. Far from the Christian temper which hesitates to enforce rights, the Corinthian disciples inflict wrongs on one another. They had been guilty of such wrongs in the past, or of worse acts. Have

they forgotten that they broke definitely with their past when Christ forgave it?

1. **Dare.** Singular: "Does any one of you dare?" In this abrupt introduction of the subject, he shows at once how he regards it. Only too well is he aware that many have so "dared" (vers. 6, 7). **another.** "his neighbour"; his fellow-Christian. To sue a heathen in the law courts might be questionable, but would be a lesser scandal. **unjust.** "unrighteous." The Christian stands on a higher moral platform. How preposterous, to seek justice from heathen judges! **saints.** 2 Thess. i. 10.

2. **shall judge.** See Dan. vii. 22, and perhaps Rev. xx. 4. Compare Matt. xix. 28 (of the apostles). **unworthy to judge the smallest matters.** Rather, "unworthy to man the humblest tribunals."

3. Not clearly affirmed elsewhere. Perhaps Paul had preached so at Corinth. Angels are part (iv. 9) of "the world," which (ver. 2) we are to judge.

4. "Perhaps you have tried arbitration and failed because you entrusted it to your weakest members?" (Best taken as a question, with R.V.)

5. "I do not really think that! I speak so, that you may realise the enormity of your behaviour."

6. Taken in R.V. as still part of the question. No difference in meaning.

7. **a fault.** This is *perhaps* a legal term. "Already, before the case is heard, it is a 'non-suit' for the Christian to be at law." **Why not rather?** Matt. v. 39; the spirit of the two passages is the same.

9. **Know ye not?** Have you forgotten your pledges to an honourable, disinterested life in Christ? Are you **deceived?** The catalogue of sins is in no very discoverable order; although, if we remember how closely idolatry was associated with immorality, we shall not wonder to find it placed among the grossest sins of the flesh.

10. **shall inherit**, etc. It has been thought that here again St. Paul remembers the teaching of our Lord (e.g. Matt. vii. 21, xxv. 34). Compare also Gal. v. 21. **kingdom of God.** See 1 Thess. ii. 12.

11. **such.** The word is neuter. Such as this had been their character! **are washed.** R.V., "were washed." The reference is to their baptism, when they accepted Christ, and to all that it meant for them (R.V. margin, "washed yourselves." The three verbs in this verse "are middle voice." They *submitted themselves* to baptism). **sanctified.** Consecrated; set apart to be God's. **justified.** Forgiven and accepted. **in the name.** Early Christian baptism was sometimes pronounced "in the name of Jesus Christ" (comp. Acts viii. 37; Gal. iii. 27; there is also more direct historical evidence outside the N.T.), not of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. xxviii. 19). Calling with faith on the sacred name of Christ is never a mere form, but an appeal which God honours. **by** ("in") **the Spirit.** The second great Gift (with forgiveness) of the New Covenant; the indwelling God.

I Cor. vi. 12-20.

**CHRISTIAN FREEDOM NOT LAWLESSNESS.**

12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not  
 expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not  
 13 be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly,  
 and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and  
 them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the  
 14 Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both  
 raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own  
 15 power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members  
 of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and  
 make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.  
 16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot  
 17 is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But  
 18 he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication.  
 Every sin that a man doeth is without the body;  
 but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own  
 19 body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple  
 of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God,  
 20 and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a  
 price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your  
 spirit, which are God's.

The idea of being done with law made some Corinthians think they were done with moral distinctions. Paul never broke up the O.T. law into a part which had passed away and a part which remained; it was a unity, and it was gone. It seems as if the quoting of phrases from their letter (vii. 1; Introd. p. 23) began here. Either Paul had said (in a sense of his own), "All things are lawful," and they had repeated his words, or else they deduced that statement from his teaching and gave it a dangerous extension even within

the region of "meats" (ver. 13, viii. 1, x. 23)—much more here, where we seem to trace the heathen idea that profligacy is a matter of course. We are never far away in this epistle from the thought of that sin. Paul meets the danger here by insisting on the connection of our bodies with Christ and with the Holy Spirit.

**12. all things are not.** Clearer, with the Greek order, R.V., "not all things are expedient." This is his first (and lowest) reply. **I will not be brought.** Lawlessness is not freedom but slavery.

**13. Meats.** Foods. These are in themselves really matters of indifference. They and the stomach that digests them pass away at death. In the resurrection life they are to have no place. The pagan idea was that **the body is . . . for fornication** just as "meats" are **for the belly**. But the body, however transfigured, is to have abiding significance as the manifestation and servant of the soul. And the body belongs to Christ.

**14. raised up the Lord.** In a glorified body. **us.** In our bodies, though glorified. **by his own power.** (Omit "own" with R.V.'s text.) It is a characteristic exercise of Divine power to raise the dead.

**15. members.** "limbs." Christ is, as it were, one great composite personality, including the bodies of His people as well as (ver. 17) their souls. Vice makes persons members of a very different fellowship.

**16. two.** "the twain." Gen. ii. 24; quoted in proof of what was last said. The O.T. spoke of marriage; but Paul implies, with deep truth, that



the whole personality takes part in sexual relationship; if not with innocence and honour, then with degradation.

18. It is never the body that sins but the man—the personality. Sexual vice, however—even more than gluttony or drunkenness—degrades the personality and the body which serves it.

20. **bought.** Another passing reference to the thought of Christ's atoning work (comp. v. 7). R.V., with the best MSS, stops at **body**. At this moment Paul is talking of the body, and not of the spirit.

#### 1 Cor. vii. 1-7.

#### THE QUESTION OF MARRIAGE.

Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me : It  
 2 is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to  
 avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and  
 3 let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband  
 render unto the wife due benevolence : and likewise also  
 4 the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of  
 her own body, but the husband : and likewise also the  
 husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.  
 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for  
 a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer ;  
 and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your  
 6 incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of  
 7 commandment. For I would that all men were even as I  
 myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one  
 after this manner, and another after that.

Comp. Introd. p. 26, and author's article, "Marriage Problems at Corinth," in *Expositor* for October 1907. Paul's whole treatment is determined negatively by the absence of the romantic idea of love, posi-

tively by his expectation of Christ's speedy return. It affects us as something very remote from our thoughts and lives. Missionaries in charge of raw converts might sympathise better. Usually it is held that vers. 1-7 lay down general principles, vers. 8-40 dealing with various applications. But that view is destroyed by ver. 2. The rest of the chapter is far from teaching a universal duty to marry. Better: Paul (vers. 1-7) *forbids husbands and wives to separate on a religious scruple*. But while some at Corinth held scruples, the "enlightened" party must have laughed at them—laughed at celibacy—almost laughed at chastity. Paul begins by correcting these opposite errors.

1. **whereof ye wrote.** Introd. p. 23. **not to touch a woman.** Not to be involved in the relations of marriage at all.

2. **every man.** Each husband; the word is ambiguous in Greek, as in many languages. **every woman.** Each wife (similarly).

Vers. 3-5 expand this idea; marriage a safeguard. **fasting** (ver. 5) is omitted in R.V.'s text.

6. **this.** The permission to separate for short seasons of special prayer. In the verses generally, Paul is not permitting but commanding.

7. **But.** R.V. has a different reading, "Yet," which makes the sense of ver. 6 all the clearer. **as I myself.** Happy and safe in the single life, and serving God (ver. 32) without distraction.

#### I Cor. vii. 8-24.

#### THE DUTY OF THE MARRIED.

8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for  
9 them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain,

10 let them marry : for it is better to marry than to burn. And  
 unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let  
 11 not the wife depart from her husband : but and if she  
 depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her  
 12 husband : and let not the husband put away his wife. But  
 to the rest speak I, not the Lord : If any brother hath  
 a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with  
 13 him, let him not put her away. And the woman which  
 hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to  
 14 dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving  
 husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife  
 is sanctified by the husband : else were your children un-  
 15 clean, but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart,  
 let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage  
 16 in such cases : but God hath called us to peace. For what  
 knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband ?  
 or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy  
 17 wife ? But as God hath distributed to every man, as the  
 Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain  
 18 I in all churches. Is any man called being circumcised ?  
 let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in un-  
 19 circumcision ? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision  
 is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping  
 20 of the commandments of God. Let every man abide in  
 21 the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called  
 being a servant ? care not for it : but if thou mayest be  
 22 made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord,  
 being a servant, is the Lord's freeman : likewise also he  
 23 that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought  
 24 with a price ; be not ye the servants of men. Brethren,  
 let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

These verses repeat the two former principles :  
 Celibacy is excellent ; marriage is safe. And  
 they add two more : Christ does not allow  
 marriage to be broken off ; in general, religion

consecrates life, and does not turn things upside down.

8. **therefore.** R.V. reads "But." This supports our interpretation of vers. 1-7; not general principles but the special class of those already married, and now the contrasted class. **unmarried.** Apparently unmarried *men* only; (single) women are dealt with from ver. 25 onwards. **widows.** Not widowers (unless our MSS are all wrong).

Vers. 10, 11 may be a parenthesis, repeating vers. 2-7, and adding Christ's direct authority. But probably there is a shade of difference. Vers. 2-7 seem to correct a mistaken religious scruple; vers. 10, 11 restrain restless souls who desired, without their partners' consent, divorce and freedom to re-marry.

10. **And.** Better, "But" (R.V.), the very light "But." **not I, but the Lord.** Christ's recorded teaching (Mark x. 11, 12) the supreme authority. Paul quotes it as Mark gives it, in a form applicable even to *Gentile* conditions. In Israel, a husband could divorce his wife, but not a wife her husband.

11. **if she depart.** "if she have departed." Grammar permits that translation; sense demands it. Paul could never lay down what must—at least—be done by those who in the first instance deliberately disobey Christ! Whereas, if separation had already taken place, it might be no easy matter to get back to right relations.

12. **the rest.** Those to whom Christ's plain precept does not directly apply—difficult cases. **that believeth not.** One who remained unconvinced when the husband became a Christian.

13. **if.** Not in the Greek; not needed.

14. There is no pollution in such a union. The spouse, like the children of a Christian, is in a

sense brought near to God by that fellowship. **now.** Not a note of time. Logical: "As things are."

15. **under bondage.** Bound in duty by some desperate means to keep the unhappy marriage still in existence. **but God**, etc. A marriage by constraint or pressure on the heathen spouse is sure to be full of dispeace. God promises peace.

16. **what.** R.V., "how." This makes the meaning clearer. You hoped to be the means of the other's conversion and ultimate salvation. How do you know it would ever have happened?

17. New principle—there is a *religious* value in still being, as regards outward things, what we were when grace came to us (vers. 20, 24). **But.** "Only" (a different "But").

19. Comp. Gal. v. 6, vi. 15.

21. **a servant.** "a slave." **but if.** R.V. margin, "nay, even if thou canst become free, use" slavery "rather." Astonishing advice! But quite in the line of the passage. What do external things matter? (vers. 22, 29-31). God chose you as a slave, or chose slavery for you (vers. 21, 24).

22. **freeman.** "freedman."

23. Comp. vi. 20. It cost no small price to invest us with our strange freedom, our strange servitude! **be not.** R.V., more precisely, "become not." **servants** (*i.e.* "slaves") **of men.** Perhaps by party-spirit (i. 12). At any rate, some sort of inward moral bondage is meant, not mere servile status.—This verse is evidently a parenthesis.

## I Cor. vii. 25-38.

## A FATHER'S DUTY TO HIS DAUGHTER.

25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the  
Lord : yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained  
26 mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I suppose therefore that  
this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for  
27 a man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife ? seek not to  
be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife ? seek not a wife.  
28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned : and if a virgin  
marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have  
29 trouble in the flesh : but I spare you. But this I say,  
brethren, the time is short : it remaineth, that both they  
30 that have wives be as though they had none ; and they  
that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice  
as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though  
31 they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as not  
abusing it : for the fashion of this world passeth away.  
32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is un-  
married careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how  
33 he may please the Lord : but he that is married careth for  
the things that are of the world, how he may please his  
34 wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin.  
The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord,  
that she may be holy both in body and in spirit : but she  
that is married careth for the things of the world, how she  
35 may please her husband. And this I speak for your own  
profit ; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that  
which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord  
36 without distraction. But if any man think that he behaveth  
himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower  
of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he  
37 sinneth not : let them marry. Nevertheless he that standeth  
stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power  
over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he



38. will keep his virgin, doeth well. So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well ; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.

Is there not a special difficulty about the young girls who are growing to marriageable age at Corinth ? Young men must decide for themselves ; girls, according to the ancient world, must have their lot fixed for them. Does the principle of "abiding as you were called" hold its ground in face of the great change from childhood to womanhood ? Paul thinks it does, on looking farther to the troubles of the time—harder for the married than for the single, troubles which he believes (vers. 26, 29–31) are the beginning of the "great distress" (Matt. xxiv. 21) which Jews looked for before Messiah's coming, and Christians before the Second Advent. Yet he only advises. Marriage is certainly not a sin.

25. **virgins.** As in our own language, the word may mean either young men or maidens ; and, as in our language, it is generally—and here—used of the latter only. **commandment.** Whether in Christ's recorded words, or by special revelation. **my judgment.** Advice only ; but St. Paul hints (in reply, no doubt, to Corinthian disparagement) that his advice has strong claims to respect. Comp. ver. 40.

26. **so to be.** But in English the phrase makes no sense in this context. R.V., "to be as he is." A general principle reiterated. It takes two to make a marriage, and Paul, even in this section, advises primarily the predominant partner.

28. **but I spare you.** "and I would spare you."

29. **short.** R.V., more accurately, "shortened." Perhaps we should compare Matt. xxiv. 22 (not the

same word, however, in Greek).—What do the events of so short a day matter?

31. **abusing it.** Better (R.V. margin), “using it to the full.” We may but sip the cup of this world; we dare not, if we would, drain it. What is true in view of Paul’s belief in Christ’s speedy return is hardly less authoritative to any Christian who duly considers the extreme shortness and uncertainty of life.

32. **without carefulness.** “free from cares.”

35. Paul is advising, not commanding. If any feel his advice too great a strain, let them put it aside. He only wishes their highest good.

36. **virgin**, *i.e.* “virgin daughter,” as R.V. fills in. Comp. last clause, “Let *them* marry,” also ver. 38, “giveth in marriage.”<sup>1</sup> **pass the flower of her age**, *i.e.* not be elderly but be adult, and so marriageable. The words must be understood in the light of those that follow—if need so require; if there is danger of things going wrong should she remain single.

I Cor. vii. 39, 40.

### THE SPECIAL CASE OF WIDOWS.

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married  
40 to whom she will; only in the Lord. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

An appendix on the special case of widows. They—exceptional women—are free in that world to mould their own lives. (Not so in non-Christian India.)

<sup>1</sup> The natural and usual translation.

40. also that I. "that I also," as in Greek and in R.V. Again (see ver. 25; and comp. xiv. 37 along with iii. 1) Paul is replying to conceited critics. He is not inferior to them!

### I Cor. viii. 1-13.

#### THE QUESTION OF IDOLATRY.

Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity  
 2 edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing,  
 3 he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any  
 4 man love God, the same is known of him. As concerning  
 therefore the eating of those things that are offered in  
 sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing  
 in the world, and that there is none other God but  
 5 one. For though there be that are called gods, whether  
 in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords  
 6 many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of  
 whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus  
 7 Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. Howbeit  
 there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with  
 conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered  
 unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.  
 8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat,  
 are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.  
 9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of your's  
 10 become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For  
 if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in  
 the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is  
 weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered  
 11 to idols; and through thy knowledge shall the weak  
 12 brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin  
 so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience,  
 13 ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my

brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

The second query of the Corinthians is discussed for three chapters, though chap. ix. is mainly a digression. Chap. viii. is preliminary. Paul admits what they say about the non-existence of pagan gods; but simple souls may think differently—be tempted—be lost! if they are encouraged to accept hospitality, or attend club feasts, in heathen temples.

1. **we all have knowledge.** A quotation from their letter. They had either said this in so many words; or else they had dwelt at great length on what they “knew,” to which Paul retorts, “We all know” and “we know that we all know.” **puffeth up.** iv. 6, 18, 19, v. 2. **edifieth.** R.V.’s literal “buildeth up” brings out the contrast. There is always danger of conceit in mere knowledge.

3. **is known of him.** We expect “knoweth him.” But Paul rather avoids admitting so much as that (xiii. 12; Gal. iv. 9; comp. Matt. xi. 27). “Master, I do so wish I knew what you think about God,” said a girl to Benjamin Jowett. “The question rather is, my dear, what God thinks about me.”

4. Again, from **we know** onwards, he seems to quote the Corinthian letter. **idol** (1 Thess. i. 9) is properly image or statue; then an image worshipped; then the supposed god behind the image. It is the god of whose non-existence enlightened Corinthians feel so sure; and in a sense Paul thoroughly agrees with them.

5. It has been asked whether the quotation from

the Corinthian letter is not prolonged here and in ver. 6. Surely not! This is too subtle and too tender to come from any mind but Paul's. **in earth.** Roman emperors? Who were being, more and more, literally worshipped. **as there be,** etc. By this parenthesis Paul makes two points: **gods many**—polytheism is a great fact, over against the one true God, even if it has its seat only in men's deluded minds; **lords (many)**—this title is as familiar to the heathen as to the Christian; a second Divine designation has been stolen from its one true bearer. "Lord" to St. Paul does not stand *lower* than "God" (Phil. ii. 9, 11), whatever the heathen might make it. It is impossible to accept the view that Paul here insists on the *real* existence, *i.e.* as demons, of the false gods. That comes later (x. 20). The enlightened took a different line. And Paul here goes with them as far as he can.

6. **but.** "Yet." **to us.** "As we believe"; but the meaning is, "As we know." **in him.** To or for Him. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever. **by** ("through") **whom.** In creation (Col. i. 16). **we by him.** In redemption.

7. **with conscience of.** R.V. follows a better reading: "being used until now to the idol." Habit, in their thought, is too strong for them. **it.** The food. **weak.** And so mistaken. **defiled.** Needlessly burdened, but still burdened; and that makes the act, in them, sin.

8. Enlightened use of food, however correct, does not bring us nearer God. We lose nothing if we should abstain. In the early days of teetotalism, its critics talked, rather sanctimoniously, of "God's

good creature drink." No; "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking" (Rom. xiv. 17).

9. **But.** What we really have to watch is this.

10. **emboldened.** Literally "edified." What an edification enlightenment may work—one which brings ruin with it!

11. **Christ died for all.** Even if a soul should be lost—Christ died for him. Tragic paradox!

12. **wound.** Not simply pain but injure—loading it with guilt.

13. **Comp.** Rom. xiv. 21 (Introd. p. 28 note). **to offend.** "to stumble."

#### 1 Cor. ix. 1-14.

### THE PRINCIPLE OF THE SURRENDER OF RIGHTS.

Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work  
 2 in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship  
 3 are ye in the Lord. Mine answer to them that do examine  
 4 me is this, Have we not power to eat and to drink?  
 5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?  
 6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear work-  
 7 ing? Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?  
 or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the  
 8 flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the  
 9 law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses,  
*Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth*  
 10 *out the corn.* Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this



is written : that he that ploweth should plow in hope ;  
 and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of  
 11 his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it  
 12 a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If  
 others be partakers of this power over you, are not we  
 rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power ; but  
 suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.  
 13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy  
 things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait  
 14 at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath  
 the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should  
 live of the gospel.

Paul has spoken (viii. 13) of his willingness to  
 forbear using flesh (or wine, Rom. xiv.). He was not  
 actually vegetarian or teetotal; but he did not  
 boast at random; there were rights he habitually  
 waived. Like all apostles, he had the right to  
 support; in a word or two—attacks at Corinth  
 upon his apostolic dignity must have been very  
 slight so far—he vindicates his position, and then  
 confirms the apostolic right by three analogies from  
 ordinary life (ver. 7) and two from the O.T. (vers.  
 8–10, 13), then last of all by Christ's words (ver. 14).

1. **am I not free?** R.V. and best MSS put  
 this first. "I have rights, have I not?" We  
 moderns are apt to think of freedom as the  
 negative right not to be interfered with by others.  
 Paul, like the Greeks, thinks of *positive* rights. The  
 "free citizen" of Greece might be hampered by  
 semi-socialistic rules; but, as he had a vote and  
 a share in government, he was "free." The  
 Teutonic idea has elements of new truth in it  
 ("individual freedom," Tennyson). But we must  
 not forget the other truth. **seen.** At conversion  
 (Acts ix., etc. etc.).

2. **seal.** A man's seal serves as a second verification besides his signature.

Ver. 3 might go grammatically either with what precedes or with what follows. The sense favours taking it with vers. 1, 2. "That's my answer to my critics!" What follows is explanation of his actions, rather than defence of rights; it is also example to the Corinthians (comp. p. 262).

4. **power.** Better, "the right." (And so repeatedly.) **to eat**, etc., viz. at the cost of the churches.

5. **a sister.** A lady sharing Christian faith (vii. 39, "in the Lord"). **a wife.** Literally "as wife." The wife, of course, would need food too.—Twice a year the Congregational Union of England and Wales has to entreat delegates, for whom hospitality is provided, not to give trouble by asking permission to take their wives with them. **other.** "the other." The Twelve (iv. 9). **the brethren of the Lord** and **Cephas** must also have gone about with their wives, preaching (note on i. 12).

6. **I only.** Of all leading Christian teachers. **and Barnabas.** An afterthought—No: there's Barnabas too!—We see that Barnabas (Acts iv. 36, ix. 27, xi. 22, xiii. 1, 2, xv. 39) shared Paul's self-denying ordinance. Probably Apollos did not, or he would have been named. **to forbear working**, i.e. with the hands; ver. 16 disclaims the power of dropping *Christian* work.

7. **the milk.** Ewe's milk (with butter and cheese made from it) was used as freely as we use cow's milk. Little flesh was or is eaten in the East.

9. Deut. xxv. 4 (1 Tim. v. 18). Paul seems to exclude animals from a direct share in God's re-

gard. The O.T. did not (Ps. xxxvi. 6; Jonah iv. 11), nor need we.

10. **altogether.** "as no doubt He does." Comp. R.V. margin; also x. 11. **should be partaker of his hope.** Better MSS and R.V., "in hope of partaking," *i.e.*, of course, should thresh in this hope.

11. **spiritual.** The good seed of God's kingdom. **carnal.** Worldly sustenance. Not here = sinful.

12. **others.** Who were threshers, not ploughmen? Apollos? Note on ver. 6. This seems the beginning of a new paragraph; but he breaks off to mention two important supplementary arguments.

13. First: Direct not allegorised teaching of O.T. law. Also, of course, the practice of all heathen temples. When priestly ideas crept into Christianity, verses like this were abused as proofs that the O.T. law throws light on the position of Christian "priests." Paul's analogy is confined to a single point.

14. Secondly: Christ's words (Matt. x. 10).

#### I Cor. ix. 15-18.

#### PAUL'S OWN LABOUR.

- 15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should  
16 make my glorying void. For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me;  
17 yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto

18 me. What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

Paul's principle of abstaining from taking a salary. There are exceptions (2 Cor. xi. 8; Phil. iv. 15, 16). If the churches generally had not been so acquiescent in Paul's working for bread, he might not have been so resolved to keep to the plan! Ver. 12 merely said he *had* abstained: he now adds that he *will*. The last thing he desires is to see the system changed. It is his pride. To preach is no credit to him; there he is a slave with a task. Here he does a little more than he need do, and earns "wages,"—the wages of going without wages!

17. **a dispensation.** "a stewardship," to dispense gospel truth.

18. **abuse not.** Better, "use not fully." Comp. vii. 31 and note there. We must leave a margin. The man who does no more than bare duty never does his duty well. The man who exacts every just right turns unjust. Justice is not justice unless it is the manifestation of a higher and sweeter spirit.

#### I Cor. ix. 19-22.

#### PAUL'S BONDAGE IN SERVING OTHERS.

19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself  
20 servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I  
21 might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God,

but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that  
22 are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I  
might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men,  
that I might by all means save some.

He not only waives rights, but stoops to a sort of slavery for the good of others.

19. **from all men.** Rather, "from all things," now that the bondage of O.T. law, with its ten thousand ritual prohibitions, is at an end. **gain.** For the Master, and for eternal salvation. **the more.** In another context these words mean "the majority" (2 Cor. ii. 6). Here it means "many." Paul is too modest—too sensible of awful facts (ver. 22)—to write "all."

20. **became a Jew.** In race, he was a Jew; could not help it; did not wish to alter the fact; was proud of it. He speaks here of religion; in all innocent observances he will Judaize (see next clause). **as under the law.** Best MSS and R.V. add the important words, "not being myself under the law." To Paul, "law" is O.T. law, and as such a unity, and abolished in Christ. See note at head of paragraph vi. 12–20.

21. **without law.** Gentiles; but the word has the suggestion of "lawless" too. Hence there is double need of a parenthesis here (**being not . . .**) **under the law.** Literally "within law." "Under law" is not a Pauline description of a Christian's position.

22. **the weak.** Needlessly scrupulous consciences (viii. 9, etc.). **all things to all men.** It is a pity we use the phrase so contemptuously of time-servers. Still, our habit points to a danger. With weak men Paul's system might work badly.

Even in the noble Paul it was doubtless misconstrued by many. **some**. Not even "many," ver. 19 (though "some" is not emphasised in the Greek).

I Cor. ix. 23-27.

PAUL'S MOTIVE.

23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be par-  
 24 taker thereof with you. Know ye not that they which run  
 in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run,  
 25 that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the  
 mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to  
 26 obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I  
 therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one  
 27 that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and  
 bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I  
 have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

The motive: to help the gospel's progress, and share its blessings. If in vers. 15-18 Paul seems almost to suggest the R.C. ideas of supererogation and merit, he now shows clearly that such ideas are far from his thoughts. He is a sinful man, saved by grace, and under the solemn if liberating law of duty.

23. **this**. R.V. and good MSS, "all things,"—one more "all"! **for the gospel's sake**. To spread it. **partaker** (ver. 10). To share its salvation.

24. The parable is inexact. In our Christian race, all who run may win. The parallel is this—Many men run who will not win. **So**. "Even so."

25. **temperate**. They "go into training."  
**a corruptible crown**. The great athletes of



Greece were not pot-hunters. A crown of parsley, pine-leaves, or "wild-olive" (Ruskin) was their reward. Fame, *i.e.* a fading fame! Christian fame is eternal (Rom. ii. 7).

26. The parable of the foot-race passes into that of the boxing match.

27. **my body.** Self is the enemy. **preached.** Like a herald, at the games? **castaway.** Disqualified? But, in any case—lost!

#### I Cor. x. 1-13.

#### THE GREAT DANGER.

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud,  
 2 and all passed through the sea ; and were all baptized unto  
 3 Moses in the cloud and in the sea ; and did all eat the  
 4 same spiritual meat ; and did all drink the same spiritual  
 drink : for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed  
 5 them : and that Rock was Christ. But with many of  
 them God was not well pleased : for they were overthrown  
 6 in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples,  
 to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they  
 7 also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of  
 them ; as it is written, *The people sat down to eat and*  
 8 *drink, and rose up to play.* Neither let us commit fornication,  
 as some of them committed, and fell in one day three  
 9 and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as  
 some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.  
 10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and  
 11 were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things  
 happened unto them for ensamples : and they are written  
 for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are  
 12 come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take  
 13 heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but

such as is common to man : but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

In a graver tone St. Paul now resumes the subject of idol-meats. The O.T. shows an example of those who had what may be called a baptism, who had supernatural food and supernatural water furnished them through Christ, yet who miserably perished. Why? They fell into grievous sin, but the central sin was idolatry. Christians also have an ordeal to pass through. They may secure safety from God, but the danger is acute.—This is the first time (the only N.T. passage) where Baptism and the Supper—two “sacraments,” as theologians say ; the only sacraments of Protestantism, and the chief sacraments even by Catholic admission—are bracketed.

1. **I would not . . . ignorant.** For the expression, comp. 1 Thess. iv. 13. “Do not forget ! This is weighty !” **our fathers.** Gentile Christians were, so to speak, adopted into the “Israel of God” (Gal. vi. 16 ; Rom. xi. 16, etc. etc.). Comp. 1 Pet. iii. 6. **under the cloud.** See especially Ex. xiv. 19 (Num. ix. 18 ; Ps. cv. 39). **through the sea.** Ex. xiv.

2. **baptized unto Moses.** As Christians “into Christ” (same Greek word) : note on i. 13 ; Gal. iii. 27 ; Rom. vi. 3.

3. **spiritual.** Supernatural, heavenly — Neh. ix. 15 (John vi. 31). **meat.** Food. The manna (Ex. xvi. 14, etc. etc.).

4. **spiritual drink.** The miraculous supplies of water from the rock (Ex. xvii. 6 ; Num. xx. 11).

**that followed them.** The Jews had a legend to this effect, first about the miraculous spring, then actually about the rock from which it flowed. Paul, whether or not he means it literally, allows himself to use that language. And apparently his readers must have known the legend. **was Christ.** The not yet incarnate Christ the source of all supernatural help and saving blessings, as Christ glorified is to us.

5. **many.** "most," *i.e.* all except Caleb and Joshua (Num. xiv. 29, 30). **they were overthrown,** etc. Almost verbally from Num. xiv. 16 (LXX).

6. **examples.** Typical specimens of sin and its results. Warnings. (Modern usage confines "examples" to a pattern of what is *good*.) **lusted.** They longed for the fleshpots of Egypt (Num. xi. 4, 5, and especially 34). Some Corinthians coveted the luxury of social gatherings in heathen temples (viii. 10), with all their dangers.

7. Ex. xxxii. 6 (verbally from LXX). **some of them.** Probably *some* Corinthians were in special danger.

8. Num. xxv. 1-9. **three and twenty thousand.** Possibly a mere slip of memory. O.T.—at least as we have it—"twenty-four thousand."

9. **tempt.** Israel "tempted" chiefly (Ps. lxxviii. 18, xcv. 9, cvi. 14) by denying God's power to care for them; the Corinthians were likelier to tempt by presumption. **Christ.** R.V., "the Lord." But "the Lord" even in O.T. is Christ, according to St. Paul (ver. 4). **of serpents.** Num. xxi. 4-6 (John iii. 14).

10. **murmur ye.** Against Paul's severity? *e.g.* chap. v., or even here. **murmured.** Num. xvi. 41.

the destroyer. Ex. xii. 23. Here, the *plague* angel? Num. xvi. 48; comp. 2 Sam. xxiv. 16.

11. **ensamples.** "examples" (ver. 6; see note there). **for our admonition.** Comp. ix. 9, 10. **ends of the world.** Literally "of the ages." At the end of history, the conflicts of the beginning are likely to be repeated with still greater severity; many apocalyptic writings show this belief at work.

12. **he standeth.** And is sure to stand easily—that is meant. Paul admits that at present they stand by grace—else they could not **fall!** But he warns against light-hearted self-confidence.

13. **common to man.** R.V., "such as man can bear." Literally "human." It is hard not to think that Paul is contrasting these lighter temptations with more formidable temptations from demons (ver. 20) likely to come about in the last great conflict (ver. 12)—especially dangerous for those who put themselves in demons' power! Still, if that were his meaning, we might have expected "*hath taken you as yet.*" **God is faithful** (comp. i. 9). Words of comfort—in view of the more dreadful temptations that will come? Danger is great; safety is possible.

#### I Cor. x. 14-22.

#### PAUL'S FINAL DECISION.

14 { Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak  
15 { as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing  
16 { which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of  
Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the com-  
17 { munion of the body of Christ? For we being many are

one bread, and one body : for we are all partakers of that  
 18 one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh : are not they  
 19 which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What  
 say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is  
 20 offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that  
 the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to  
 devils, and not to God : and I would not that ye should  
 21 have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of  
 the Lord, and the cup of devils : ye cannot be partakers  
 22 of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Do we  
 provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

Paul's final decision about direct "idolatry"—the word is new. ("Idolaters" at ver. 7 and earlier at v. 11.) Chap. viii. spoke only of flesh consecrated to idols. The "enlightened" Corinthians held that, pagan gods being non-existent, dangers arising out of idolatry were non-existent dangers. A modern Christian might have warned them, half rationalistically, of the immoral associations of idolatry—a very widespread feature in nature-religions; Paul speaks, in his strong realism, of unclean demons. We must choose between Christ and the "idols"; *i.e.*, there must be no "sitting at meat in temples" (viii. 10). A deeper reason than that given in chap. viii. forbids it.

14. **flee.** Instead of playing with the danger.

15. He is confident they will admit the force of what he lays before them.

16. **cup of blessing.** The last cup at the Passover was so called. Probably Christ used that cup for His own new ordinance of the Supper. And probably the phrase had been continued in the Christian ordinance; hence "cup of blessing which we bless"—which Christians give thanks for; thanks to the pure God of holiness. **com-**

**munion of the blood.** Mysteriously, in ways not to be explained, it puts us in touch with Christ's blood. (A very different thing from saying with Roman Catholics that Christ's physical blood is in the cup.) **bread** or "loaf." The oneness of it is an important symbol to Paul (next verse). And its use sets up mysterious communion with Christ's body.

17. The best authorities prefer the translation of R.V. margin: "seeing that there is one bread [or loaf], we, who are many, are one body." This does not much affect the meaning, but perhaps makes the train of thought clearer. Important, though lower, is the mystical union of Christian with Christian in the ordinance. Acts of worship are real spiritual transactions, for good or bad!

18. An argument from the O.T. **after the flesh.** In contrast (note on ver. 1) with the spiritual or Christian Israel. **eat the sacrifices.** Priests chiefly; but all worshippers had shares. Spiritual effects resulted, according to the people's belief; really resulted, so long as God chose.

19. Paul feels an objection rising in the minds of his Corinthian readers. What is the point of all this? Is an idol deity real, after all? No: but——

20. **devils.** Quite a fair translation. Literally "demons." Several words here verbally from Deut. xxxii. 17 (LXX). This assertion strikes us as an unexpected qualification of St. Paul's admission (viii. 4) that heathen gods do not exist. But *he expects the Corinthians to grant it* (ver. 15). He does not say that heathen gods literally are devils; e.g., Jove is not the name of Satan himself or of Beelzebub. But there is devilish immorality in heathenism. Religion is prostituted there.



21. It is even now morally impossible to belong to both fellowships ; soon, at the day of judgment, the separation will be visible. **the Lord's table.** An O.T. phrase (Mal. i. 7, 12).

22. Deut. xxxii. 21. God's "jealousy" in O.T. is ordinarily His zeal for what is good. Perhaps in Deut. xxxii. it means jealousy of rivals. Do Christians try to make Christ jealous? Paul asks. **are we stronger?** Our sentimental age, which shudders at employing force, ought to ponder well the truth that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

#### 1 Cor. x. 23-xi. 1.

#### THE QUESTION OF MEATS.

23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient : all things are lawful for me, but all things  
24 edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man  
25 another's wealth. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles,  
26 that eat, asking no question for conscience sake : for the  
27 earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. If any of  
them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be dis-  
posed to go ; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no  
28 question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto  
you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his  
sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake : for the  
29 earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof : conscience,  
I say, not thine own, but of the other : for why is my  
30 liberty judged of another man's conscience? For if I by  
grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for  
31 which I give thanks? Whether therefore ye eat, or drink,  
32 or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give  
none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor  
33 to the church of God : even as I please all men in all

things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

xi. I Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

Without any note of the transition — it is a difficult chapter!—Paul turns to questions about butcher-meat. Much of this would have been killed with (heathen) sacrificial rites. In the main, Paul rebukes the scrupulous, but demands (comp. chap. viii.) real consideration for their “weakness.”—It is absolutely unthinkable that Dr. Massie’s valuable commentary should be right at this point—that “feasting in an idol’s temple” is “on principle lawful” to “Christian freedom.”

23. Comp. vi. 12. Here seemingly Paul has in his mind *foods* exclusively. All meats are clean for the Christian. He might in some sense, in other contexts, speak of “all things” without qualification as “lawful”; here, where he has just spoken of acts that are fatally sinful, we must limit the expression somehow; therefore, no doubt, we should limit it to food. **all things are not expedient.** “not all things are expedient.” Why does not R.V. render so here, as well as vi. 12? The words are the very same. **all things edify not.** “not all things edify.”

24. **another’s.** “his neighbour’s.” **wealth.** Welfare, or good.

25. **shambles.** Meat market. In those days, before sanitation, meat market and slaughter-house would be close together. Modern English confines the word to slaughter-houses, and even then perhaps to high-flown tropes — “like a shambles.”

26. Ps. xxiv. 1.

**27. to a feast.** In his house, not in a temple. (1) That had been ruled out, twice over, for different reasons (viii. 10, x. 21). (2) At a temple it would be known to all from the very outset what kind of meat was on the table (ver. 28). **disposed to go.** A distinct hint is implied— Might it not perhaps be wiser to decline going? Yet it is not a thing Paul will roundly forbid.

**28. any man.** A weak Christian brother is thought of, for his *conscience* has to be studied (ver. 29). **offered in sacrifice unto idols.** But the best MSS (and R.V.) say nothing here about "idols." If Christians accept heathen hospitality, they must speak with politeness, even to each other, about their host's religion. Some Christian says to the other, "This is *consecrated* flesh." (Or does it mean that the weak brother is afraid of the mystic power of the consecration formula?) **for the earth, etc.** This beautiful quotation is meaningless if repeated here. It is not found in the best MSS, and should be struck out, with R.V.

Vers. 29, 30 are very hard to understand in this connection. Possibly Farrar's view is best—that we have here another quotation from the Corinthians' letter; an objection, in a parenthesis. If so, ver. 31 is Paul's answer to the objection— You are free, but you must always seek God's glory, and also (ver. 32) must seek the good of others. **by grace.** Rather, "with thankfulness."

**32. Gentiles.** R.V., "Greeks" (note on v. 1). Can we consult, simultaneously, every one's scruples and prejudices? We must do our best! That from left and from right recruits may be attracted for Christ's service, and those within the church strengthened.

33. Comp. ix. 22 and note on 2 Cor. v. 11. **many.** Literally "the many." Probably the same meaning as "the more" (ix. 19).

xi. 1. **followers.** "imitators." **of Christ.** Rom. xv. 3; Phil. ii. 5, etc.

Paul steers midway between the rationalistic party and the superstitious. Heathen deities do not exist. This world is God's world. Flesh is no worse for having been consecrated to any Mumbo-Jumbo of them all. But evil spiritual powers do exist. And to share in antichristian worship is a wickedness which may prove our ruin. We did not mean it so? It is so. When our will acts, even thoughtlessly, the contamination comes upon it.

# 1 Cor. xi. 2-16.

## WOMEN IN THE CHURCH.

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to  
3 you. But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man;  
4 and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his  
5 head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is  
6 even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for  
7 a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory  
8 of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the  
9 woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the  
10 woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause

ought the woman to have power on her head because of  
 11 the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the  
 woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.  
 12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also  
 13 by the woman; but all things of God. Judge in your-  
 selves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God un-  
 14 covered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if  
 15 a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a  
 woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair  
 16 is given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be  
 contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches  
 of God.

Comp. Introd. p. 28. Another of the Corinthians' questions. Perhaps they asked: Ought women to speak and pray unveiled at church gatherings? Paul decides they must be veiled, possibly implying that they must not speak in public at all. He strongly asserts the subordination of women as part of the Providential order, grounded in creation.

2. Their letter had said that they "remembered him," etc. He "praises" them—a little drily. **ordinances.** "traditions" (2 Thess. iii. 6).

3. **I would have you know.** A slight difference of expression from x. 1. **the head.** The most dignified part of the frame, the seat of sight and hearing; also, according to ancient physiology, the part which nourishes the whole (Eph. iv. 15, 16; Col. ii. 19). But that is not the point here.

4. **prophesying.** Preaching under spiritual inspiration. **having his head covered.** A purely imaginary case. Every one would feel that to be improper, argues St. Paul. What a difference between men and women! In the case of the latter, custom (and propriety too?) demands a

covering. **his head.** Conceivably St. Paul sees some connection between the literal head and Christ the natural Lord of all men (ver. 2)? But we must be content to take the argument without that refinement.

5. **uncovered.** "unveiled," R.V., and so throughout: a different Greek phrase from the "covered" of ver. 4. **shaven.** As the loose women of those days were shaven by way of punishment.

6. **covered.** "veiled," — and throughout from this point.

7. **image.** Gen. i. 27. **glory of God.** "Glory" is primarily radiant light streaming from a luminous body. Man is a derived splendour; God's wonderful production. **woman** shares the Divine image (Gen. i. 27!). How can she be man's distinctive "glory"? See Gen. ii. 21, 22! And next verse.

10. **power.** Probably, as R.V., "a sign of authority." The "covering" showed she was a decent man's wife or daughter or sister. **angels,** invisibly present at Christian gatherings, might be shocked (perhaps even tempted? Gen. vi. 2) by unveiled women. Some have conjectured that this last strange clause was not St. Paul's, but an early marginal gloss by a copyist. Of course it is in all our MSS.

11. The other side of the truth; compare the still stronger statement Gal. iii. 28.

12. **the woman is of the man.** At creation (Gen. ii.). **the man by the woman.** At birth. **all things,** etc. All these social laws finally depend on God's appointment (ver. 3).

13-15. He now appeals to their own human—



or Greek — sense of propriety. Customs vary widely, yet all doubtless tend to feel that what is specially feminine, like long hair, is “effeminate” and unsuitable in a man.

16. Last argument (here? xiv. 34!). No church practises the strange proposed custom, of bold women ministering unveiled.—For the moment this advice was indisputably wise. Social upheaval would have swamped the spiritual life of the young church. It is a different and difficult question whether these verses are of permanent obligation. Yet we ought not lightly to dismiss St. Paul’s warning against the unsexed woman.

#### 1 Cor. xi. 17-34.

#### DISORDERS AT THE LORD’S SUPPER.

- 17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.
- 18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly
- 19 believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among
- 20 you. When ye come together therefore into one place,
- 21 this is not to eat the Lord’s supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is
- 22 hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say
- 23 to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he
- 24 was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which

25 is broken for you : this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood : this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of  
 26 me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup,  
 27 ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of  
 28 the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him  
 29 eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.  
 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and  
 31 many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should  
 32 not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the  
 33 world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together  
 34 to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home ; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

Either answering a question in their letter, or, more probably, proceeding on what he has heard (ver. 18) in other ways, he rebukes the selfish disorder of their Lord's Suppers, testifying to the institution and sacred meaning of the ordinance.

17. in this that I declare unto you. "in giving you this charge." I praise you not. Contrast to ver. 2. for the worse. Dreadful indeed, if a Christian church or its fellowship should prove more of a moral hindrance than of a moral help! It is possible. (Chalmers once hypothetically described an Established Church of a bad type as "a moral nuisance.")

18. divisions. Again, literally, "schisms." It is hard to say whether there was a connection between

the theological factions of chaps. i.-iii. and this more social cliqueishness. **partly.** He makes the rebuke as gentle as possible. He cannot, will not, believe all he has heard!

19. Dr. Bousset suggests that this is irony, perhaps playing upon some foolish assertion in their letter. There *must* be divisions! Oh yes; we must "sift out" the most precious!

20. **this is not.** Better, "it is not possible."

21. **before other.** Without "tarrying" (ver. 33) for the late comers, kept long at their daily toil if they were poor. **his own supper.** There is no sharing of the provisions brought. **one is hungry.** One has little or nothing to eat. **another is drunken.** The well-to-do have (and actually consume) too much both to eat and to drink!—The separation of the Communion proper from the *Agapè* (Introd. p. 28) may have marred the simplicity of the rite. But how unavoidable, if such abuses could arise even in Paul's lifetime!

22. **shame them.** "inflict a feeling of shame upon those . . ." **have not.** Are in want; are poor. **in this** goes best with the words that follow, repeating ver. 17, and contrasting with ver. 2.

23. **I** is emphatic. Is that your idea of the Lord's Supper? "Now hear mine." Paul's authority, under Christ, is sacred. **of the Lord.** This particular Greek word "of" or "from" need not imply a direct revelation. Paul having learned the testimony of the earliest church (comp. xv. 3) passes it on—a gift from Christ through Paul to Corinth, and to us. **bread.** Perhaps "a loaf of bread,"—comp. at x. 17.

24. **Take, eat.** Omitted in R.V.'s text. (Additions from parallel passages constantly crept into

MSS.) **broken.** Again omitted in R.V.'s text. Hardly any difference in meanings.

25. **when he had supped.** Perhaps = the after-supper cup of the paschal ritual (see on x. 16). **new testament.** "new covenant," Jer. xxxi. 31 (Heb. viii. 7, etc. etc.). Matt. xxvi. 28 (and Mark) in R.V. give "blood of *the* covenant"; comp. Ex. xxiv. 8; Zech. ix. 11. Differences in emphasis, not in meaning. A covenant is instituted by sacrifice, and the covenant Christ institutes is the new final gift of God to men. This states a fuller doctrine of atonement (than v. 7 or vii. 23).

26. This verse is St. Paul's explanation. It is no part of Christ's words of institution. **shew.** Better, R.V., "proclaim." The Lord's Supper is an acted gospel, a Divinely appointed Passion-play.

27. **unworthily.** Without remembering that it is a sacred feast. Perfect worthiness is not required, though many have tortured themselves as if it were; the ordinance is for sinners saved by grace. **guilty.** Of gross irreverence to the sacred things represented in the bread and the cup.

28. **examine himself.** To make sure he realises that this is a sacred feast. **so.** When the examination is satisfactory; when one comes to the Lord's Table exercising faith in Christ.

29. **unworthily.** Not in R.V. text here. Sense is unchanged! "Eateth judgment to himself *if he discern not* the (Lord's) body." **damnation.** "judgment" or "condemnation." Not used of final loss here (ver. 32), yet of a loss that is great and grievous. **not discerning.** Not distinguishing the sacred meaning of the ordinance—not separating it from common meals which satisfy hunger.

30. Many cases of illness and even of death have occurred in the church at Corinth. Paul declares them to be a (merciful) punishment for the scenes at the Lord's Table.

31. **would judge.** R.V., "discern,"—same word as in last clause of ver. 29; not the ordinary word "judge."

33. See ver. 21.

34. The Communion love-feast is not a proper occasion for a heavy meal. **at home.** Evidently before joining in the worship (no fasting communion here!). **the rest.** What points, we do not know.

### 1 Cor. xii. 1-3.

#### THE TESTING OF PROPHECY.

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have  
2 you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried  
3 away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Where-  
fore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the  
Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can  
say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

The next topic raised in the Corinthian letter—spiritual gifts—occupies three chapters, though again the middle chapter (xiii.; comp. ix.) is an insertion loosely connected with the general theme. Two questions had been put: How were they to know genuine prophecies from spurious? Answer: By their attitude towards Jesus Christ. The mere presence of miracle and miraculous prophesying did not guarantee Divine truth.

1. Comp. x. 1 (xi. 3).

2. **that.** R.V., "that when,"—a different reading. The two words in Greek are very similar; hence the second could easily drop out. Awkward expressions are more apt to be simplified by copyists than simple expressions to be made complicated. In the present verse the sense is hardly if at all affected. **carried away.** "led away." In heathenism, the religious impulses were irresistible; in the Christian church, inspired utterances were put to the test by other inspired men (ver. 10, *discerning of spirits*; 1 John iv. 1). **dumb idols.** In contrast to the true God, who speaks in revelation.

3. Prophetic messages, says St. Paul, fall into two classes, friendly to Christ and hostile (so 1 John iv. 2, 3, with a slight change corresponding to changed conditions). In our own more complicated age, we seem to fight on the other side from men who really have the love of Christ in their hearts (although they withhold the confession of His name with their lips); and men fight side by side with us who seem to have the name of Christ but not His Spirit. Each age has its own burdens; this one is among the heavy burdens appointed for us. But ultimately what Paul says must be the absolute truth. All moral influences must take sides—for or against Christ.—It is said that modern spiritualistic messages, whatever source they really emanate from, have a curious tendency to Unitarianism. If they do not exactly say "anathema Jesus," no more do they say "Jesus is Lord." **accursed.** Greek "Anathema,"—as at xvi. 22.



1 Cor. xii. 4-30.

## THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.  
5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same  
6 Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the  
7 same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation  
8 of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to  
9 one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ; to another  
10 the word of knowledge by the same Spirit ; to another  
11 faith by the same Spirit ; to another the gifts of healing by  
12 the same Spirit ; to another the working of miracles ; to  
13 another prophecy ; to another discerning of spirits ; to  
14 another divers kinds of tongues ; to another the interpreta-  
15 tion of tongues : but all these worketh that one and the  
16 selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.  
17 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all  
18 the members of that one body, being many, are one body :  
19 so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized  
20 into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether  
21 we be bond or free ; and have been all made to drink into  
22 one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.  
23 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not  
24 of the body ; is it therefore not of the body ? And if the  
25 ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the  
26 body ; is it therefore not of the body ? If the whole body  
27 were an eye, where were the hearing ? If the whole were  
28 hearing, where were the smelling ? But now hath God  
29 set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath  
30 pleased him. And if they were all one member, where  
31 were the body ? But now are they many members, yet  
32 but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand,  
33 I have no need of thee : nor again the head to the feet, I  
34 have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of  
35 the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary :

23 and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.  
 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant  
 25 honour to that part which lacked: that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the  
 26 same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be  
 27 honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the  
 28 body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of  
 29 healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all  
 30 workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

The second question raised by the Corinthians in regard to spiritual gifts was: Which is greatest? They inclined to *tongues*. Paul here replies: All are good, and they are mutually necessary. We should note the Trinitarian formula (vers. 4-6); of course it is Trinitarian manifestation—God's threefold working towards us—and not exactly the Trinitarian doctrine of what God is in Himself. Here again we must not expect scientific exactness in Paul's list of gifts (vers. 8-10) or of gifted men (vers. 29, 30). He writes with a swing, as words occur to him. It might be impossible, *e.g.*, to distinguish "faith" (ver. 9—*as used there*) from "miracles" (ver. 10). Vers. 12-28 state the parable of body and limbs. The Church is a "social organism."

5. **administrations.** "ministrations." All gifts are for service; to the one Lord, Jesus Christ.

6. **all in all.** "All things in all" persons—all spiritual life in all Christians.

7. **to profit withal.** Not, to take pride in!

8. **wisdom.** Comp. chap. ii. 6, etc. If this is to be distinguished from **knowledge**, it will mean something more mystical and profound, appealing perhaps to intuition rather than to clear, calculating thought.

9. **faith.** Plainly in this connection (see xiii. 2) the faith which works miracles. **gifts of healing.** A special class of miracles.

10. **miracles.** Literally "powers"; emphasising the manifestation of God's omnipotence, as "faith" (ver. 9) emphasised that in the Christian which laid hold on God's power. **prophecy.** Inspired preaching of Divine truth, with or without supernatural foreknowledge. **discerning.** God's spirits must be recognised and evil spirits unmasked. (A true spiritual message is sometimes described in N.T. as a good "spirit." Comp. 1 John iv. 1.) **divers kinds of tongues.** Ecstatic trance-like utterances (xiv. 1-19), perhaps regarded as angel-speech (xiii. 1). There is no ground whatever—with the doubtful exception of the Day of Pentecost (Acts ii. ; see Commentary on Acts in this Series)—for supposing that, by a miracle, foreign languages were spoken. **interpretation.** See xiv. 13, 28. The ecstatic speaker, or some one else, might be inspired to explain to the church gathering what the torrent of sounds meant.

11. **dividing.** Dividing up, as it were, the original bundle of gifts.

12. **is Christ.** Not simply, is the Church! We are one Spirit *in Him*. Christ here is thought of as the whole (organism) rather than as the Head.

13. By faith, at baptism, all differences (comp. Gal. iii. 28 ; Col. iii. 11 ; even Rom. x. 12 ; Eph. ii. 18) pass into spiritual unity. The differences which appear henceforth (ver. 14, etc.) are not mutually exclusive and repulsive, but complementary. **made to drink.** A less usual image. Not only did we come to live in the Spirit, but the Spirit to live within us.

23. The very parts we should be ashamed to expose have to receive special care for that reason.

25. **no schism.** No selfish separation. Compare for word and idea i. 10, xi. 18.

26. Severe pain, in a highly organised body, cannot be localised. No more can good or ill in a Christian church.

27. **in particular.** R.V. margin, "each in his part."

28. A very broken construction, characteristic of St. Paul's impetuosity. (1) He begins "some," but never adds "others." (2) He speaks of types of Christian manhood **first . . . secondarily . . . thirdly**, but **then** adds a list of *gifts*. **in the church.** The universal Church, in which alone the apostles had their place. **apostles.** The great founders of churches. **teachers.** Less inspired, or less manifestly inspired, than prophets. **miracles.** Ver. 10. **healings.** Ver. 9. **helps.** All kinds of social succours. **governments.** When there were few officials, those with natural or supernatural taste for church management took the lead, and others gratefully allowed them to do so (1 Thess. v. 12). It has been asked whether the supernatural gift of church government is not conceived as coming to men for a time, and then

leaving them in order to settle upon others? He says "governments," not "persons with the gift of governing." But that seems over-subtle. **tongues.** Ver. 10. Here again, significantly, at the bottom of the list.

30. **do all interpret?** Ver. 10.

### A WAY BETTER THAN ALL GIFTS.

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Some gifts, however, are intrinsically more desirable. And there is one thing best of all!

31. **best.** Literally "better"; but R.V. follows the reading "greater." Which are "greater"? See xiv. 1. **yet.** "still," or else "besides." Perhaps, with R.V., following the Greek order of words: "a still more excellent way."

1 Cor. xiii. 1-13.

### THE PRAISE OF LOVE.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a  
2 tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove moun-  
3 tains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth  
4 me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,



5 doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is  
 6 not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in  
 7 iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things,  
 believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.  
 8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies,  
 they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease;  
 9 whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we  
 10 know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that  
 which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be  
 11 done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I  
 understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when  
 12 I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we  
 see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I  
 know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am  
 13 known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three;  
 but the greatest of these is charity.

The Praise of Love, as "the Greatest Thing in the World" (Henry Drummond). It is greater than all gifts—the Corinthians' favourite, tongues (ver. 1); St. Paul's own favourite, prophecy, and the rest (ver. 2). It is greater than its own works; these are nothing without it (ver. 3). Why is it so great? It is patient, capable, effective (vers. 4-7); it is what the law asks (Matt. (vii. 12) xxii. 36-40), or it "fulfils the law" (Rom. xiii. 10). Hence it and it alone will banish the faults of the Corinthians. (He is not hitting at them constantly; that would be unloving; but he must glance at their faults from time to time.) Hence, too, love is permanent, while mere "gifts" ceases (vers. 8-10). Our boasted powers are but child's play (ver. 11). Our boasted insight furnishes only passing and perhaps distorted glimpses of the truth (ver. 12). But faith lasts; and hope lasts; and love lasts, the greatest of all.—By virtue of this splendid poem, St. Paul



might claim the title usually given to St. John as "apostle of love."

1. **tongues.** Here perhaps "languages," languages of angels being the "tongues" of xii. 10 and having all the emphasis. Human speech, *angel* speech! **charity.** The ancient heathen world had very low associations with erotic love. Hence the LXX had to introduce a new word—*Agapè*; and the N.T. adopts it, not only in the technical usage noted xi. 21. For similar reasons the Latin Bible translated "charity," and A.V. frequently followed it. But we, thank God, may reclaim the noble word "love" for a noble Christian meaning. To forbid us on grounds of "rhythm" is pedantry. There are more important things than rhythm. **brass.** A body of Irish M.P.'s were at one time rather rudely nicknamed "The Pope's Brass Band." Wagner, and still more Wagner's imitators, are thought to blare too much brass at us. Such music is hardly better than noise; but even the finest musical instrument, even the violin, cannot rival the human voice, whose songs are songs "with words." What a pity if we dehumanise the music of our lives! **tinkling.** R.V., "clanging." (Cymbals do more than tinkle.)

2. The other gifts briefly. **mysteries.** "wisdom" (xii. 8)? **knowledge** (xii. 8). **faith** (xii. 9; also Matt. xvii. 20, xxi. 21). He cannot well bring in healings (xii. 9). Even loveless healing might be "something"!

3. This is what we misname "charity"; and then we call things "cold as charity"! **to be burned.** There is a story that an Asiatic (Buddhist?) missionary had burned himself alive

at Athens, to recommend his doctrine. (Martyrdom was known to the Jews, but burning alive is a refined cruelty specially associated with Christian persecution. It can hardly be the death of a martyr for the true faith that Paul is alluding to. "That I may boast"—see R.V. margin—is similar in Greek, and is the sort of reading that would be substituted when copyists felt shocked at seeming to "undervalue" a martyr's death. And we need the words "to be burned" as explaining "give my body.")

4. **puffed up.** iv. 6, 18, 19, v. 2, viii. 1.

5. **doth not behave itself unseemly.** Genuinely right inward feeling is the best teacher of good manners. **her own.** "Its" a possessive (comp. ver. 4, *itself* was not yet in use). **not easily provoked.** R.V. omits "easily"; the stronger statement is probably original. Irritation destroys efficiency. It makes us fools. **thinketh no evil.** R.V., "taketh not account of evil." Passes over what is evil, if possible, in merciful silence.

6. **rejoiceth not in iniquity.** The virtuous glow we feel in denouncing evil-doers is dangerous. **in the truth.** R.V., more literally, "with the truth." When there is something good to be truthfully said of a man, love rejoices to say it.

8. **faileth.** Literally "falleth." Like a soldier in battle? Love bearing a charmed life as the child and heir of heaven? **fail.** This is not the same word as "faileth." It is the same word as **vanish away** or (R.V., both times) "be done away."

9, 10. Our knowledge is so scrappy it is rather superseded than completed by heaven's light. A candle, to the noonday sun!

11. **a child.** A young child. **understood.** R.V., "felt."

12. **through.** Must be understood as signifying "by means of." **glass** is better "mirror." Ancient mirrors were of metal, with no glass in front. Hence they reflected imperfectly. This word and **darkly** are from Num. xii. 8 (LXX). **I am known.** R.V., "I have been known,"—taken knowledge of by God, at conversion. See viii. 3 and note. Paul uses a still stronger word here, first of our perfect future knowledge, and then of God's perfect and perfectly loving present knowledge of us. Comp. John xxi. 17. Religious knowledge, according to St. Paul, is hardly in existence yet; but it *is to be*.—Is not all this one-sided? we might ask. And are we really worse off than Moses was in the O.T.? (Num. xii. 8). A complementary view of the truth is given 2 Cor. iii. 18 (where, by the way, there is again a parable of the mirror). But for the moment, if there has been any want of fulness or balance, ver. 13 puts things right.

13. **now.** Not the "now" of ver. 12. Logical: "as things are." If knowledge passes, faith **abideth**. (This faith—not so xii. 9, xiii. 2—is faith in the great Pauline sense, trust in God and Christ.) The common interpretation is sadly astray, e.g. "Faith will vanish into sight, Hope be emptied in delight." That is exactly the opposite of what Paul says. **faith, hope, charity.** Paul's favourite three (1 Thess. i. 3). How can hope last in heaven? (1) It is hardly separable from faith; trust lasts! (2) As long as we look forward, hope has a part to play. **the greatest.** Why? Perhaps because faith and hope lay hold of God, but love makes us like Him. *God is love.*

## I Cor. xiv. 1-19.

## THE INFERIORITY OF TONGUES.

Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather  
 2 that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an un-  
 known tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God : for  
 no man understandeth him ; howbeit in the spirit he  
 3 speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh  
 unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.  
 4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself ;  
 5 but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I would that  
 ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied :  
 for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh  
 with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may  
 6 receive edifying. Now, brethren, if I come unto you  
 speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I  
 shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge,  
 7 or by prophesying, or by doctrine ? And even things  
 without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except  
 they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be  
 8 known what is piped or harped ? For if the trumpet give  
 an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the  
 9 battle ? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue  
 words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what  
 10 is spoken ? for ye shall speak into the air. There are, it  
 may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of  
 11 them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the  
 meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a  
 barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto  
 12 me. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual  
 gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.  
 13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue  
 14 pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an unknown  
 tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is un-  
 15 fruitful. What is it then ? I will pray with the spirit,

and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding  
 16 also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth  
 17 not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God, I speak  
 19 with tongues more than ye all: yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

Tongues are inferior to prophesying (ver. 1), because they do not edify (vers. 2, 3), or edify only the speaker (ver. 4), unless they pass into prophesying (ver. 6), *i.e.* are accompanied by the further supernatural gift of interpretation (ver. 13). Parallels from human affairs emphasise the inferiority of tongues (vers. 7–11). Tongues, then, are good; but plain teaching that helps the simple is far better (vers. 16–19).

1. **Follow after.** “Pursue.” Love is to be our chief pursuit, our chief ambition. **desire.** “be zealous of,”—nearly as at ver. 12. **spiritual gifts,** *i.e.* specially “tongues,”—see ver. 2. Earnest as this desire may properly be, it is to be the least of our ambitions. Higher, and nearer to love (for it helps the church more), is prophecy.

2. **unknown** is a gloss of A.V.’s, repeated at vers. 4, 13, 19, 27. God knows the meaning of a **tongue**. Even Rom. viii. 26, 27 *may* be said primarily of “tongues.”

3. **exhortation.** 1 Thess. ii. 3. R.V. has “comfort,” perhaps in the Old English sense of “strengthening.” If so, it is rather perverse!

**comfort.** R.V., "consolation." (Not, of course, the word "exhortation," which is sometimes rendered "consolation.")

6. To make the criticism as acceptable as possible, Paul uses himself as an imaginary example. He is not depreciating *them*! He is inquiring what would happen if *he* relied on tongues alone. **revelation** seems to go with **prophecy** (as more directly supernatural); **knowledge** with **doctrine**, *i.e.* "teaching" (as less so).

7, 8. The parallel of music. Paul does not write like a musician but like a practical man; music—if you play carefully—may give signals. The modern music lover perhaps approaches nearer than any other modern to "speaking in tongues of angels." Things that "break through language and escape" find their gracious embodiment in that art. Even in heaven we look for music to supplement speech.

9. Second parallel. In speaking we must not mumble. **By the tongue.** With the physical organ. There is no reference here to angelic "tongues." **into the air.** Not into your neighbour's heart and brain.

10. Third parallel. We must know each other's languages if we are to have rational intercourse. **so many.** "such and such a number." **voices.** Used here for "languages." The word "tongue" or "language"—same Greek word—had been pretty hard-worked already.

11. **a barbarian.** A mere idiotic stammerer, as primitive Greeks, like other hasty persons, judged foreigners to be.

12. **of spiritual gifts.** Literally "of spirits." Comp. 1 John iv. 1; Rev. xxii. 6. **excel.** "abound."



Seek, then, for abundance of gifts, but seek that it may take a useful direction.

14. I. Again, for courtesy's sake, Paul applies the possibilities to himself. **a tongue. an unknown tongue.** (Omit "unknown.") Supernatural inarticulate speech. **my spirit.** The "subconscious" self. **understanding.** The conscious self, which by analysing impressions is able to convey them to others and so (in this case) "edify" them.

15. Union of the two is best—depth and clearness. **sing.** They chanted some of their rhapsodies, if they spoke others; better, if the chant could become an articulate "psalm" (ver. 26).

16. **bless, i.e. praise God. occupieth the room.** In reference to this peculiar form of worship in "tongues." **unlearned.** A term from the Greek mysteries, "uninitiated." Christians may have deliberately adopted it for describing those who, while not unbelievers (ver. 24), were as yet only inquirers; in later language, catechumens. And Paul may be hinting—If the "initiated" will pour out unexplained rhapsodies, most of their fellow-Christians are thrust back, as it were, into the position of outsiders. **say Amen.** A Hebrew custom (1 Chron. xvi. 36; Ps. cvi. 48) adopted by the early Church. One prays; others respond "Amen"—So it is; or, So be it—adopting his petitions as their own. Such is the original force of "Amen." Comp. 2 Cor. i. 20.

18. A notable fact. It is because he was filled with enthusiasm that Paul was able to assert the superiority of love. Dry rationalists would have given such teaching in vain.

I Cor. xiv. 20-25.

THE GIFTS BETTER THAN TONGUES.

20 Brethren, be not children in understanding : howbeit in  
 21 malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. In  
 the law it is written, *With men of other tongues and other*  
*lips will I speak unto this people ; and yet for all that*  
 22 *will they not hear me, saith the Lord.* Wherefore  
 tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to  
 them that believe not : but prophesying serveth not for  
 23 them that believe not, but for them which believe. If  
 therefore the whole church be come together into one  
 place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those  
 that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that  
 24 ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one  
 that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of  
 25 all, he is judged of all : and thus are the secrets of his  
 heart made manifest ; and so falling down on his face  
 he will worship God, and report that God is in you of  
 a truth.

It is childish to set store on the merely extraordinary endowment. As an O.T. quotation warns us, "tongues" are inflicted upon unbelief and confirm men in it. (If God purposes good to us, He will give us better gifts along with the "tongues.") Prophecy blesses saints and sinners.

20. Christ had praised children as pattern Christians (*e.g.* Matt. xviii. 3). Paul explains in what sense childlikeness is good, and in what sense childishness is bad. **men.** Literally, perfect ; full-grown ; mature. This use of the word may help us to understand "perfect" in not a few N.T. passages.

21. **In the law.** Isa. xxviii. 11, 12, quoted freely from memory (*e.g.* there is no "saith the Lord" in the O.T. passage). Jews held the

Pentateuch to be the most sacred scripture of all. When they called other parts of their Bible "law," they used in a wider sense the name of what was considered the central revelation. This usage of speech is followed here ; also Rom. iii. 19 ; John x. 34, xii. 34, xv. 25. **will they not hear.** The Jews complained that Isaiah treated them like children, talking baby talk to them ; God replied, They shall listen to barbaric talk indeed ! from their conquerors. Paul implies that this was a judgment, and not meant to reclaim. ("They will not hear" is not in O.T. as we have it.)

22. We might render freely—Mere "speaking in tongues" is a sign (of judgment) for unbelievers (confirming unbelief).—The contrast: *Prophecy edifies believers.* A.V.'s **serveth** is more happily supplied (Greek does not express the verb in this clause) than R.V.'s "is for a sign." It is not *qua* sign, but *qua* promoting faith—creating it (ver. 24), or giving it increase—that prophecy surpasses.

23. Well may mere "tongues" harden ! They sound to a stranger like madness ! Comp. Acts ii. 13. **unlearned.** Here literally (not as in ver. 16) the outsider : the mere inquirer after Christian truth.

24. Second superiority of prophecy—it converts. **convinced.** "reproved." **of all.** "by all" (twice).

25. Especially when the prophetic message supernaturally fits the circumstances of the stranger.

I Cor. xiv. 26-40.

## PRACTICAL REGULATIONS FOR EDIFYING:

26 How is it then, brethren ? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue,

hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be  
27 done unto edifying. If any man speak in an unknown  
tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that  
28 by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no  
interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him  
29 speak to himself, and to God. Let the prophets speak two  
30 or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed  
to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.  
31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn,  
32 and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets  
33 are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of  
confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.  
34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is  
not permitted unto them to speak; but they are com-  
manded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.  
35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their  
husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak  
36 in the church. What? came the word of God out from  
37 you? or came it unto you only? If any man think  
himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge  
that the things that I write unto you are the command-  
38 ments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him  
39 be ignorant. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and  
40 forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done  
decently and in order.

Practical regulations restricting the use of  
“tongues” in public worship, and ruling out  
(tedium and) disorder: all on the principle of  
“edifying,”—“love edifies” (viii. 1).

26. **a psalm.** A newly composed inspirational  
hymn. **a doctrine.** “a teaching.” **an inter-**  
**pretation.** Of another person’s “tongue.”

27. **by two or three.** No more than two or  
three successively. **by course.** Modern English,  
“in turn” (R.V.). There is to be no talking

against each other: perhaps at Corinth this had occurred.

28. **to himself and to God.** (Comp. vers. 2, 4.) Viz., at home.

29. **by two or three.** Literally "two or three" (and no more, just then). **other.** Old English for "others." **judge.** R.V., "discern"; comp. xii. 10. Eccentricity, or self-delusion, was not to be tolerated unchecked where Paul had influence with the churches.

30. A rather surprising rule. A time limit would suit our modern ideas; but, to give the floor to the interrupter! Yet this is Paul's judgment—God presumably speaks not through the man who wishes to go on talking, but through the other who is now first opening his lips. Wordiness is not among the fruits of the Spirit.

31. **all prophesy.** All, in turn, who have the endowment. That, says Paul, is desirable. **comforted.** In the old English sense of "strengthened."

32. But can these rules be obeyed? Yes; even the Divinely given spirit is subject to the moral judgment and will of the Christian who receives the gift. Another surprise, perhaps; yet how profoundly wise a decision!

33. **the author.** R.V. prefers to fill in rather "a God" (no substantive is expressed in the Greek). **as in all,** etc. Some take this with what follows. Others take the first part of ver. 33 as a parenthesis, joining "as in all," etc., with ver. 32. Still, though the construction is hard, it seems best to take ver. 33 as one sentence. God is a God of order; in all the churches.

34, 35. Another irregularity to rule out—women speaking in public worship. But are the verses Paul's? The external evidence (of the MSS) gives some small ground for doubt. If the verses are genuine, Paul returns to the theme of xi. 2-16, feeling perhaps that he has not been decisive enough. Also he spoke there of the rights of prophetesses; here, he speaks from the point of view of orderliness in church gatherings. Substantially new are (1) an express command: Be silent! (2) An appeal to O.T. regulations as literally binding on Christian churches.—The present writer does not agree with those who think these two verses directly inconsistent with chap. xi.; see notes there. On the other hand, it is surprising that the supplementary passage seems to contemplate chiefly the ladies asking questions. 1 Tim. ii. 12 grapples with the real crux: May they teach?

Ver. 36 connects with the woman question, if vers. 34 and 35 are genuine; otherwise, with ver. 33—"all the churches." In either case, we may paraphrase as follows: Pray are you, who stand so stiffly for your own views, the origin of revelation? Or are you the only recipients of it?

37. **let him**, etc. Let him have spirituality enough to recognise—this is the sense of **acknowledge** in older English—the Spirit's voice in the great Apostle.

38. **let him be ignorant**. As much as to say, I have now spoken my last word and made my last appeal.

39. **forbid not**. The inferiority of "tongues" is still clearer than at ver. 1.



I Cor. xv. 1-11.

THE EVIDENCE OF THE RESURRECTION  
OF CHRIST.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and  
 2 wherein ye stand ; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep  
 in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have  
 3 believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all  
 that which I also received, how that Christ died for our  
 4 sins according to the scriptures ; and that he was buried,  
 and that he rose again the third day according to the  
 5 scriptures : and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the  
 6 twelve : after that, he was seen of above five hundred  
 brethren at once ; of whom the greater part remain unto  
 7 this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he  
 8 was seen of James ; then of all the apostles. And last of  
 all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.  
 9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be  
 called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.  
 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am : and his grace  
 which was bestowed upon me was not in vain ; but I  
 laboured more abundantly than they all : yet not I, but  
 11 the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether  
 it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

The whole of chap. xv. is taken up with the great topic of the future resurrection, most probably in answer to an appeal from the Corinthians in their letter, though possibly because of what St. Paul has heard through other channels. The indirect and gradual approach to the subject, the solemn tone, reveal his conviction that, here at least, supremely sacred truth is being called in question. Hence he recites his own fundamental

testimony, affirms that all the apostles concur in it, and adds that, in and with Christian faith, the Corinthians themselves had accepted this same gospel.

1. **I declare.** R.V., "make known." They knew it. Have they been forgetting it? Their objections and debates seem to presuppose that it is false!

2. **by which also ye are saved.** Best taken, as by R.V., in close connection with ver. 1, and so as the fourth and culminating assertion about the gospel. *It saves!* **if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you.** This is inexact. We must take, as R.V., "[I make known, I say] in what word [words] I preached it unto you, if ye keep it in memory" or "hold it fast." As a remedy against their errors, he will call attention to the very wording of his gospel testimony. **in vain.** A different word from those in vers. 10, 14, 17. To alter their views of fundamental truth now is to give the lie to their own faith, and to declare it a worthless thing.

3. **first of all.** As most sacred of all; Christ's death. **according to the scriptures** of the O.T., e.g. Isa. liii. (Luke xxii. 37).

4. **buried.** The very last stage in the humble lot of human life. **according to the scriptures.** Hos. vi. 2?

5. **of.** "by." **Cephas.** Luke xxiv. 34. **of the twelve.** Really only eleven after the treachery and death of Judas, and before the appointment of Matthias, Acts i. (Ten, John xx. 19 (24)? Eleven, John xx. 26?)

6. **above five hundred.** Matt. xxviii. 16, etc.? **remain.** Witnesses to the glorious truth. **fallen**

**asleep.** And so plainly in need of the resurrection hope.

7. **of James.** Doubtless "the Lord's brother" (Acts xii. 17, xv. 13, xxi. 18; Gal. i. 19). This appearance of the Risen One is not on record elsewhere in the N.T., but it tallies with the inclusion of hitherto sceptical "brethren" (Mark iii. 21; John vii. 5) among the believers (Acts i. 14). **of all.** "by all." At the farewell interview of the Ascension? (Luke xxiv. 50; Acts i. 4). St. Paul does not locate these events, whether at (or near) Jerusalem or in Galilee. It seems plain, however, that his testimony includes manifestations of Christ in both regions. See further the present writer's *First Primer of Apologetics*, chap. viii.

8. **last of all.** Not last of all visions—Paul had other visions in plenty (*e.g.* 2 Cor. xii. 1)—but last of all appearances of the Risen One proving His resurrection. **born out of due time.** Born not naturally, but by violence, by miracle, into Christian faith.

9. **least.** He is both last and least!—The Greek words too resemble each other, although not so closely as the English pair do.

10. **vain.** Same word as ver. 14.

11. These words are the final refutation by St. Paul himself of the Tübingen theory, that Paul and the Twelve took fundamentally different views of the Christian salvation. With those who really rejected his gospel, Paul would hold no parley. Here, on the contrary, he affirms fundamental agreement. **so ye believed.** Even the Corinthians were, or had been, in the general Christian faith!

## 1 Cor. xv. 12-19.

## THE ARGUMENT FROM THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead,  
how say some among you that there is no resurrection of  
13 the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead,  
14 then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then  
15 is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea,  
and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have  
testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised  
16 not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead  
17 rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not  
18 raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then  
they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.  
19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all  
men most miserable.

We are not in possession of the exact opinions which so startled and pained the Apostle, but we must infer that "some" Corinthians regarded a physical resurrection as ridiculous and indeed impossible. Resurrection was the Jewish hope, slowly attained in the later times of O.T. revelation (Isa. xxiv.-xxvii.; Dan. xii. 2). Greeks found it easier to believe in immortality of the soul; but this involved a tendency, seen even in Plato, to treat the body as a prison, matter as an evil thing, asceticism as the way of salvation. Paul stands for the Biblical positions, that matter is good, and that a body of some sort is the necessary organ and expression of a soul. Those who deny the reconstitution of the body, he argues, *deny by implication* the known fact of Christ's resurrection;

but that is to deny the basis of all our hopes and of the hopes of the Christian dead.

12. **rose.** If we wish to distinguish “rose” and “hath been raised” (both are true: Christ *rose*; God *raised Him*)—if we wish to be sure which St. Paul affirms in any clause—we must consult R.V.

14. **vain.** Literally “empty.”

17. **vain.** A different Greek word. “Futile.” Christ’s resurrection is our only proof that we have acceptance with God through Him. Paul perhaps still further implies that only *the risen Lord* quickens us into the new life (by His Spirit).

18. **perished.** Non-existent? Hardly. Rather: If there is no atoning blood, no Advocate and Helper in the unseen, their belief in forgiveness was a dream; they must wake to the horror of judgment without a Saviour.

19. Not that Christians are the **most miserable** of mankind during this present life, but that Christians—if there is “no resurrection” of Christ—have in store for them the most appalling disillusionment (last verse).

#### I Cor. xv. 20–28.

#### THE ORDER OF THE RESURRECTION.

- 20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the  
 21 firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.  
 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made  
 23 alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.  
 24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have

25 put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must  
 26 reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The  
 27 last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For *he hath  
 put all things under his feet.* But when he saith all  
 things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted,  
 28 which did put all things under him. And when all things  
 shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself  
 be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God  
 may be all in all.

Really, thank God! we are unspeakably blessed. The new order of resurrection has begun; it will go on in us at the right time. All evil shall cease, and God be all in all.—As in 1 Thess. iv. and v., there is no reference to the wicked or non-Christian dead.

20. **now.** Not of time. Logical: “as things really are.” See the evidence, vers. 4-8. **and become the firstfruits.** “as the firstfruits.” By the O.T. law, the first (and best) of the crop was God’s. Such is Christ!

21. **by man—by man.** “by a man.” These are “the first man” and “the second man” of ver. (45 and) 47; also “the one” and “the one man” of Rom. v. 15, 17.

22. **all be made alive.** All who are in the case; all Christians (see next verse). The contrast is between “one” and “all.”

23. **every man.** R.V., “each.” Two divisions in the army of God—first Christ, and then His people. It is but fitting that He have His precedence in this as in everything. Comp. Col. i. 18.

24. **Then cometh.** Some think there is an interval, perhaps of a thousand years (comp. Rev. xx. 2), during which Christ visibly reigns upon earth. It



is very doubtful whether St. Paul means that—see next verses. **all rule.** Angel potencies—imperfect where they are not evil? Compare, *e.g.*, Col. i. 16, 20.

25. A reference to Ps. cx. 1; perhaps written as a Messianic psalm; in any case, worthily so applied and interpreted. The words suggest a limit to Messiah's reign (ver. 28). Paul is not merely basing an inference upon the single word **till**. The conception, surely very sublime, is of Messiah "reigning in the midst of his enemies" (Ps. cx. 2).

26. **death.** Conceivably viewed in close connection with "him that had the power of death" (Heb. ii. 14).—If resurrection is the last feat of the conquering Christ, what room is left for a thousand years of peaceful reign? See ver. 28.

27. **he hath put**, etc. Ps. viii. 6, taken in a Messianic sense; note (Ps. viii. 4) the words "Son of man." **he saith.** Scripture, or, The inspired writer says.—It seems as if St. Paul were denouncing a Christology like that (in modern times) of Swedenborg: Jesus Christ the only God, manifested now as Father, now as Son, now as Spirit.

28. Christ's mission (and what theologians call His "mediatorial sovereignty") is for the bringing back of mankind, or perhaps even of the whole creation, to God. He does not reign in a separate glory. He did not come in His own name.

1 Cor. xv. 29-34.

#### MINOR ARGUMENTS FOR BELIEF.

29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for

30 the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?  
 31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus  
 32 our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have  
 fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if  
 the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow  
 33 we die. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt  
 34 good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for  
 some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to  
 your shame.

Some minor arguments for belief in resurrection, including two very difficult verses.

29, 30. *Perhaps* we should hold (1) that Paul knows of a literal custom of baptizing living substitutes for dead catechumens, and (2) that, while disliking it, he quotes it as evidence how deeply Christians are committed to the hope of immortality. The practice is superstitious; but **If the dead rise not**—it is best to begin a new sentence with these words—at all, how could the practice be so much as thought of? Observe that he contrasts what **they** do (in this verse) with what **we** do (ver. 30).

31. **your rejoicing.** One is tempted to accept the easier reading, “our rejoicing.” But R.V. finds a meaning for the harder reading, “that glorying in you.” By my pride and joy in my Christian converts, I protest!

32. **fought with beasts.** Strangely difficult. We have no record of the scene thus described. It can hardly be literal; not only Acts but 2 Cor. xi. is silent about such a horror: also Paul’s Roman citizenship *ought* at least to have made it impossible. Nor can it well mean the uproar of Acts xviii.; Paul quitted Ephesus immediately after that (xix. 1), but while writing this epistle

he is full of plans for further work there (1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9). **if the dead**, etc. Best taken as the beginning of a new sentence. **let us eat**, etc. Isa. xxii. 13, the cry of unbelieving Jews, who did not turn to God in the hour of despair, but grasped at "a short life and a merry one."—Is it true that men ought to argue thus, or might blamelessly do so, if they lost hope of immortality? No; but if the Christian hope were exploded by scepticism, inevitably there *would* be a moral recoil and collapse.

33. **evil communications**, etc. ("evil company doth," etc.). From the poet Menander, about 300 B.C., founder of the "New Comedy." It was a stock quotation, and need not imply that Paul studied his rather indecent writings. "Your misleaders are undermining morality as well as faith."

34. **to righteousness**. Perhaps a fair paraphrase. Literally "righteously." **no knowledge of God**. Some: of His power to raise the dead. Better: of His moral requirements. Paul sees the moral taint (ver. 33) even inside the church.

I Cor. xv. 35-49.

#### NATURE OF THE RESURRECTION BODY.

35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up?  
 36 and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that  
 37 which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and  
     that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that  
     shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of  
 38 some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath  
 39 pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh  
     is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of

men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another  
 40 of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies  
 terrestrial : but the glory of the celestial is one, and the  
 41 glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory  
 of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another  
 glory of the stars : for one star differeth from another star  
 42 in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is  
 43 sown in corruption ; it is raised in incorruption : it is sown  
 in dishonour ; it is raised in glory : it is sown in weakness ;  
 44 it is raised in power : it is sown a natural body ; it is  
 raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there  
 45 is a spiritual body. And so it is written, *The first man*  
*Adam was made a living soul* ; the last Adam was made a  
 46 quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is  
 spiritual, but that which is natural ; and afterward that  
 47 which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy ;  
 48 the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the  
 earthy, such are they also that are earthy : and as is the  
 49 heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as  
 we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear  
 the image of the heavenly.

Paul, who so often has to steer a middle course, might here be rebuking a party who cherished gross pharisaic conceptions of eating and of marrying in the life to come. His language, however, rather indicates that he is still engaged with the "enlightened," who, taking for granted that the "body" hereafter must be such as we know it here, objected to the very conception of resurrection. St. Paul follows up the teaching of the Master (Matt. xxii. 30), and interprets the nature of our future body from that of the glorified Christ ; see Phil. iii. 21 (R.V.). This explanation should help Greek doubters to accept the doctrine of the resurrection.

35. **what body.** "what kind of body."

36. **Thou fool.** Senseless man! **thou sowest.** "thou" is emphatic. Thou thyself "sowest" seeds—a new image. It seems to be implied that the dead bodies of men are sown in the grave (by God? by death? by the angel of death?). **it die.** This was the physiological belief of the ancients. The gross body of the seed, of course, decays; but we now know that in strictness the living germ within does not "die"; or if it does, the seed is barren.

37. **bare grain.** "A bare" or naked "seed."  
**it may chance.** "for example."

38. Paul does not affirm natural connection between what is sown and what grows up later. Growth is to him the wonderful, almost supernatural, working of the great God; though God observes uniformity (last clause). **his own body.** "a body of its own."

39. Second analogy from nature: there are many different kinds of animal bodies.

40. Third analogy: wide contrast between earthly and heavenly bodies in physical nature. We still speak, in a different sense, of the "heavenly bodies." St. Paul regards them as samples of what God can do with matter.

41. Fourth analogy; distinctions of radiance among these shining objects; visible representatives of the heavenly world, as it were! in which angels, God, the glorified Christ, His glorified people, are at home.

42. **So.** Resurrection is to be understood in the light of God's infinite resourcefulness, as now illustrated.

44. **natural.** Literally "psychical"; of or

belonging to the "living soul" (Gen. ii. 7) of our earthly and animal life. **spiritual**. "pneumatic"; belonging to the side of our nature which is (or by grace comes to be) akin to God. **There is**, etc. R.V., following a slightly different and perhaps clearer reading, "If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body." Varieties of known bodies make the mysterious spiritual body credible.

45. **it is written**. Gen. ii. 7. **was made** (twice). "became" (twice). The quotation from Genesis stops at **soul**. What follows is St. Paul's own affirmation about Christ. **quickening**. "life-giving." And so, much greater than Adam.

46. Sin and redemption apart, there is of necessity a sort of evolution in God's gifts to men, which reaches its climax only in Christ. A noteworthy teaching, especially from St. Paul.

47. **earthy**. Like earthenware. Not the same word as "earthly," *i.e.* upon-the-earth; nor yet as "earthen" (2 Cor. iv. 7). **the Lord**. Not found in the best MSS. **from heaven**. R.V., "of heaven," *i.e.* out of heaven. Compare note on ver. 21 above.

48. **the earthy**. Those made for life on earth. **the heavenly**. Those enrolled as heaven's inhabitants.

49. **the image of the earthy**. In creation; the Adamic nature. **the image of the heavenly**. Phil. iii. 21. Sin and holiness do not directly come in here; *weakness* and *glory* are thought of.



1 Cor. xv. 50-58.

### THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SURVIVORS AT THE ADVENT.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, *Death is swallowed up in victory*. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Paul announces a new special revelation (comp. 1 Thess. iv. 15) bearing on a limited point. How can this be for "us" who survive to the Advent? Answer: By a sudden change.

50. **flesh and blood.** Ordinary earthly materials. For a similar ethical assertion, see vi. 10. **kingdom.** The future, glorious kingdom.

51. The Deists, and Archbishop Whately later, were quite right in telling us that a N.T. "mystery" is not necessarily unintelligible *once it is revealed*. Comp. on 2 Thess. ii. 7; also 1 Cor. ii. 7.

52. **trump.** Trumpet. See 1 Thess. iv. 16. **we.** The living. See 1 Thess. iv. 17 and note.

53. **put on.** Like drawing on a tight-fitting outer garment; but what a garment! One which remodels and glorifies all that it enfolds! Comp. 2 Cor. v. 2 and notes there. Also comp. Rom. xiii. 14.

54. **is written.** Isa. xxv. 8. Not exactly according to the Hebrew, however, nor yet according to the ordinary Greek version. St. Paul translates for himself. Or **in victory** may have been a traditional interpretation known to Paul; Hebrew, "for ever."

55. Hos. xiii. 14, slightly altered in words. Possibly the meaning is (or had been already, in the Jewish schools) a good deal changed, if in the O.T. God is really summoning Death and Hades to punish rebels against Him. **sting.** An ox-goad (Acts xxvi. 14), or the poisonous sting of an insect. Death is able to stab or poison us because of sin (next verse). **grave.** R.V. and good MSS. "Death."

56. **the strength,** etc. The law furnishes sin and death with their warrant for slaying us. We have broken law! and so sin is imputed (Rom. v. 13). This seems the only possible meaning here. But it is unusual; "the strength of sin" in Rom. vii. or at Gal. iii. 19 would be the law as stirring up sin within us into livelier exercise. Some have guessed the clause to be a later gloss; pure guessing.

58. The moral meaning of resurrection hope, as at ver. 32 we had the immoral meaning of resurrection doubts. The struggle "availeth"! Good work counts, and lasts, through **the Lord Jesus Christ.**

1 Cor. xvi. 1-4.

## THE COLLECTION.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.  
 2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no  
 3 gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring  
 4 your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

Answer to another question. What steps ought they to take towards "the collection"? They had already shown friendly interest some months earlier (2 Cor. ix. 2), and their inquiry proves that they were in earnest about playing their part. In the (humanly speaking) extraordinarily slight organisation of the churches, much depended upon this expression of Gentile sympathy with Jewish believers (ver. 4; Gal. ii. 10). But it was an anxious enterprise (Rom. xv. 31), and in point of fact it led to Paul's becoming Jesus Christ's "prisoner" (Acts xxi. 33; see Eph. iii. 1; Philem. 1).

1. **saints.** Used especially of members of the mother of all churches, at Jerusalem (Rom. xv. 26, "the poor [among the] saints at Jerusalem"). It was a promise—probably at the Council (Acts xv.), or at any rate at the same time as the Council—that such a collection should be made (Gal. ii. 10). 2 Cor. viii. and ix. deal with this theme. **I have given order.** By word of mouth, or in a lost epistle.

2. **first day of the week.** Already becoming

*the* day for Christians of all the seven. **lay by him.** Collections are not yet taken at public services! Each is to lay up at home. **as God hath prospered him.** More literally, "as he may prosper." **no gatherings** ("collections," the same Greek word). Paul has no mind to sink into a preacher of charity sermons, buying liberality with rhetoric.

3. **by your letters.** "Your" is an insertion: "by letters." Probably we should take these words with what follows, and refer them to Paul. Delegates are to be chosen when Paul is present; he will send letters with them to Jerusalem. The construction is rather hard, whichever way we take "by letters"; the sense seems plain.

4. **meet.** Literally "worthy" (of my going). If the gift is large enough!—It was; and Paul went—to prison, and in the end to death (Acts xxi. 13). What he now says is: Even if I go, the delegates shall go too. (Why? 2 Cor. viii. 20, 21.) He has not yet made up his mind to that momentous journey.

### I Cor. xvi. 5-9.

#### PAUL'S PLANS.

- 5 Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through
- 6 Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.
- 7 For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry
- 8 a while with you, if the Lord permit. But I will tarry at
- 9 Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

Very closely connected with the previous verses;

explaining ver. 3 especially. Yet a new topic.— On the frequent changes in his plans, see Introd. p. 30.

5. **Now.** Literally “But” or “And.” **I do pass.** That is my full resolution (at present). (1) He reminds himself that they do not know of these plans. (2) He contrasts his plan for Macedonia with his plan for a *stay* at Corinth (next verse).

6. **bring . . . on my journey.** Almost literally, “give a send-off.” **whithersoever.** To Jerusalem or elsewhere. Was Spain also contemplated? (Rom. xv. 24).

7. **now by the way.** These words have been drawn into the controversy about Paul’s visits to Corinth. It is argued that he had already paid the short visit (Introd. p. 30), and did not wish to come *en passant* upon a flying visit “again.” But if he had meant “again,” he would probably have said so plainly, as at 2 Cor. ii. 1. **if the Lord permit.** This man is not his own master! He is strong, but is sensitively alive to the indications of a higher will.

8. **tarry.** Apparently some weeks more—perhaps months. **until Pentecost.** Hardly probable that this was kept as a festival in the apostolic Church. But Christians knew the Jewish name and date.

9. **door.** Comp. 2 Cor. ii. 12. Without metaphor, “an opportunity,” viz. of service. In Rev. iii. 8, perhaps rather of personal salvation than of service; that church had “little strength.” **effectual.** As if he had forgotten his metaphor “door.” **many adversaries.** And therefore Paul is needed there?

I Cor. xvi. 10, 11.

### TIMOTHY'S VISIT.

- 10 Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear : for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I  
11 also do. Let no man therefore despise him : but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me ; for I look for him with the brethren.

Timothy (see iv. 17) is to take Paul's place, as it were, though only for a short time.

10. **without fear.** Timothy, still perhaps young, has a difficult task before him (more difficult even, it is probable, than St. Paul yet realises). Compare note on 1 Thess. iii. 2.

11. **in peace.** Not amid party wranglings, or disobedience to Paul's injunctions. He must perceive the last to be possible, though he does not apprehend it as probable. **the brethren.** Probably messengers from Paul who were to convey 1 Corinthians to Corinth.—Others ; Timothy's own travelling companions. Comp. ver. 12 and 2 Cor. viii. 18, 22.

I Cor. xvi. 12.

### THE REQUEST TO APOLLOS.

- 12 As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren : but his will was not at all to come at this time ; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

Reply to another question in the Corinthian letter. Paul had asked Apollos to return, as they



desired ; but Apollos firmly declined for the present. With what gentlemanly loyalty these two treat each other !

**12. the brethren.** Again, probably, Ephesian Christians carrying 1 Corinthians (others ; Stephanas and his friends, vers. 15, 17, returning to Corinth and carrying the epistle.) **his will.** The interpretation given in R.V. margin, "the will of God," is most unlikely in this context, describing Paul's earnest and continued request that Apollos should go.

**1 Cor. xvi. 13, 14.**

### **THE CORINTHIANS' DUTY TOWARDS ONE ANOTHER.**

**13** Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be  
**14** strong. Let all your things be done with charity.

Moral admonition in detail, elsewhere ample, narrows in this epistle of special topics to a pair of verses. Neither Paul nor Apollos can be with them now ; Timothy cannot stay long. Under God, they must care for themselves and for each other. Soldiers' virtues are called for in that Christian battle which is love.

**13. Watch.** Do not think that all is secure ! A besetting sin of "enlightenment" (viii. 1, 2). **quit . . . be strong.** "A little noticed quotation" (Cheyne) from Ps. xxxi. 24 (LXX ; but even the Hebrew is rendered in R.V. somewhat similarly).

**14. charity** ("love") will end partisanship, and accomplish even greater things.

## I Cor. xvi. 15-18.

## STEPHANAS AND HIS COMPANIONS.

15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have  
 16 addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that  
 17 helpeth with us, and laboureth. I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus : for that which  
 18 was lacking on your part they have supplied. For they have refreshed my spirit and your's : therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.

An afterthought. (1) Perhaps they may be willing to accept guidance from Stephanas and his companions? Paul has talked much with them, and feels sure he can trust their loyalty and their discretion. (2) Thanks for the pleasure which the presence of these three at Ephesus has given him.

15. **house of Stephanas.** Baptized *en bloc* with St. Paul's own hands (i. 16). **firstfruits of Achaia.** Disregarding converts at Athens (Acts xvii. 34)? Or "Achaia" *may* be confined here, as sometimes, to the immediate neighbourhood of Corinth. **saints.** Not in the special sense of the Jerusalem Christians (ver. 1). Those at Corinth, and perhaps any others passing through.

16. **unto such.** "To *these* persons," in view of their having *such* qualities; *i.e.*, as ver. 18 is rendered, (to) "them that are such." **and to every one,** etc. It is not yet the day of local church officials, bishops (or elders) and deacons. Comp. Intro. p. 14. All suitably gifted Christians are to lead; all others to follow. **us** is wrongly inserted. Better, "helpeth in the work."

17. **Fortunatus and Achaicus** were perhaps slaves of Stephanas's. Several members of his household must have been conspicuous in the church, to account for the language of vers. 15, 16. **lacking on your part.** There is no shade of blame, such as an English reader might fancy, either here or at Phil. ii. 30. It is a great *sorrow* to Paul to be absent from his converts. It was a great joy to be visited by delegates.

18. **and your's.** A polite addition. "I am sure you were as glad to send them to me as I was to welcome them." **acknowledge.** An additional reason for accepting guidance from them !

#### 1 Cor. xvi. 19, 20.

#### MESSAGES.

19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in  
20 their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.

19. **Asia.** The Roman province round Ephesus. A small part of western Asia Minor, with some islands. **Aquila and Priscilla**, who had been at Corinth with St. Paul and left it when he did, settling at Ephesus (Acts xviii. 2, 18, 26), send specially warm greetings. **in their house.** See p. 35.

20. **All the brethren.** Of the Ephesian church. **an holy kiss.** 1 Thess. v. 26 and note.

I Cor. xvi. 21-24.

**FINAL AUTOGRAPH GREETINGS**

(2 Thess. iii. 17; comp. Gal. vi. 11).

21 The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. If any  
22 man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema  
23 Maran-atha. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with  
24 you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

The first epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi by Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and Timotheus.

22. **love not.** "loveth not." All other errors will come right, not this root of bitterness. **Anathema.** See xii. 3. **Maran-atha.** This is undoubtedly a separate sentence, not going with "Anathema," as used to be thought. ("Anathema" is Greek; "Maranatha" is Aramaic (Intro. p. 1).) Probable meaning, "Lord, come!" Comp. (for the sense) Rev. xxii. 20. R.V. text here retains **Amen.**

23. The supreme safeguard.

24. The next safeguard—the love (in **Christ Jesus**) of Christ's apostle, the father of their faith.

The postscript is more than usually absurd. From Philippi! (see xvi. 8). By Timothy! Timothy was already on his way, evidently by the long land route (iv. 17, xvi. 10). The other three *may* have helped to convey the epistle.

2 Cor. i. 1, 2.

## GREETING.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:  
 2 Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. **apostle.** Note on 1 Thess. i. 1. **by the will of God.** However human partisanship may have sneered. **Timothy** joins in salutation, perhaps acts as amanuensis (of chaps. i.-ix.); but the letter is Paul's; *e.g.* vii. 3, 8, 12. **all Achaia.** This must mean the whole province (see on 1 Cor. xvi. 15), including Athens.

2 Cor. i. 3-7.

## THANKSGIVING FOR COMMON COMFORT.

3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 4 the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort  
 5 wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also  
 6 aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and  
 7 salvation. And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.

Thanksgiving for comfort—his own comfort in

Christ belonging equally to his converts; very needful, very sufficient. Chap. vii. 6, etc., should be compared.

3. **God, even the Father of.** Paul might have said this, but grammatically it is more probable that he means, as in R.V., "the God and Father of" Christ. See xi. 31, and comp. Eph. i. 17; John xx. 17. **Father of mercies.** "Author of all mercies" (a Hebraism), rather than "merciful Father." Paul uses names of God which correspond to his sense of special indebtedness. **comfort** (*Paraclesis*). Undoubtedly the meaning here, and in the sense of "consolation," not "exhortation." See next verse. Compare on 1 Thess. iii. 2.

4. **may be able,** etc. All Christian blessings look beyond our personal needs. **of God.** By God.

5. Phil. iii. 10; Col. i. 24. **consolation.** Same word rendered "comfort" above.

6. **which is,** etc. R.V., following the best MSS, transfers this clause to the end of the verse. In that case, it is Paul's *comfort* which so notably helps his converts. According to A.V., it is his *trials*. Perhaps he might have said either. "All things are for your sakes," he writes (iv. 15). **is effectual.** R.V., "worketh." **same sufferings.** When they came to themselves and shared his grief (vii. 11). **consolation and salvation.** R.V., "comfort"; the best MSS do not repeat here "and salvation."

7. **shall ye be.** R.V.'s "are ye" is perhaps a safer translation.



2 Cor. i. 8-11.

**THE SPECIAL TROUBLE AND SPECIAL  
DELIVERANCE OF THIS TIME.**

8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired  
9 even of life: but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God  
10 which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will  
11 yet deliver us; ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

The readers knew what he meant; we do not, in detail. Comp. *Intro.* p. 30.

8. **we would not have you ignorant.** Now that they are again, essentially, his dear friends, he wants them to know the worst; how the bad news from Corinth (if that was it) almost killed him. **of (our trouble).** "concerning." **above strength.** "beyond our power."

9. **but** (a strong "but"). "But it was in **ourselves**" we had this despair; there was hope in God. R.V., "Yea,"—"More than that; death was actually our settled inward expectation." **sentence.** There is good authority in support of this rendering. R.V., more literally, "answer,"—"When he asked himself the question, What is to be the end of this prostration?" he could only answer inwardly, "Death." It comes to much the same sense. **which raiseth the dead.** The God of miracle. Paul's recovery and the later

good news from Corinth (vii. 6, 7) were almost miraculous things.

10. **doth deliver** makes a smoother sense than the more strongly attested reading of R.V., "will deliver." If we must accept the latter, the closing clause will repeat it with a new emphasis. "He will continue to deliver! For I have trusted Him to do so."

11. **ye also helping.** In the future, now that they are again his loyal children. **of many persons.** In prayer.

#### 2 Cor. i. 12-14.

#### THANKSGIVING AND SELF-DEFENCE.

- 12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.
- 13 For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge
- 14 even to the end; as also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are our's in the day of the Lord Jesus.

A second ground of thanksgiving, passing imperceptibly into self-defence against possible remaining tendencies at Corinth to criticise.

12. **our conscience.** In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, when old Honest is to cross the river of death, "Mr. Honest in his lifetime had spoken to one Good Conscience to meet him there, the which he also did, and lent him his hand, and so helped him over." But we must not forget what Bunyan

adds: "The last words of Mr. Honest were, Grace reigns!" **sincerity.** R.V. reads "holiness." **conversation.** Old English for "behaviour." **more abundantly to you-ward.** Towards the churches he had himself founded—fellow-Christians and his spiritual children. This must be a reply to calumnies. See xii. 16, xiii. 7.

13. A second self-defence. His words are plain and straightforward, though enemies accuse him of quibbling. **read or acknowledge.** Two closely kindred verbs in Greek, "read or understand." Similarly, "ye shall understand," and (next verse) "ye have understood." Comp. note on 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

14. **acknowledged.** See ver. 13. **in part.** For the critical tone has not disappeared so fully as ought to have been the case. **even as ye.** With grave courtesy and kindness he adds that *they* also are *his* pride and joy. **in the day of Christ** refers to the last statement in particular (1 Thess. ii. 20; Phil. iv. 1).

## 2 Cor. i. 15-22.

### NO FICKLENESS IN THE APOSTLE OR HIS GOSPEL.

15 And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you  
16 before, that ye might have a second benefit; and to pass  
by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way  
17 toward Judæa. When I therefore was thus minded, did I  
use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose  
according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea  
18 yea, and nay nay? But as God is true, our word toward  
19 you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus

Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in  
 20 him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea,  
 21 and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed  
 22 us, is God ; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

A third self-defence. He has not really been fickle in his plans—with a digression ; No, nor in his gospel ! this being a thrust at the trimming and time-serving Judaisers.

15. **in this confidence.** Before the troubles had grown grave. **before**, *i.e.*, as next verse explains, before going to Macedonia. **a second.** As next verse explains, a *double* benefit ; two visits. This plan had been made and then cancelled since the writing of 1 Cor. xvi. See Introd. p. 30.

16. **toward Judæa.** By the time the now cancelled plan was framed, he had definitely resolved on going to Jerusalem. Not so, as yet, when he wrote 1 Cor. xvi. 4, 6.

17. **lightness.** His enemies had said that he changed plans frivolously. **the flesh.** Human and worldly motives. **yea yea.** The doubling is for emphasis. "Am I a yes-and-no man?"—Only a careless reader will think there is inconsistency here with Christ's words Matt. v. 37. Jesus says, Don't swear ; keep to plain yes for yes and plain no for no. Paul says, I scorn to mix up yes and no in one breath.

18. **true.** "faithful."

19. The Judaisers had played a double game. Even the great Apollos had been used by a party

as their so-called "leader." Paul recalls the first Christian missionaries to Corinth as claiming special honour and teaching simple truth. Compare the names at 1 Thess. i. 1 (2 Thess. i. 1).

20. R.V., more accurately, "how many soever be the promises of God, in him is the yea,"—the Divine fulfilment,—“wherefore also through him is the Amen,” the response of human faith.—Some think it must already have been church custom to close public prayer with “*through Jesus Christ our Lord*,” followed by a general “Amen.” **Amen.** See on 1 Cor. xiv. 16.

21. **stablisheth us.** A constant spiritual blessing, the source of this unwavering loyalty to truth and duty. **hath anointed us.** Christ is literally “the Anointed one,” but we also are anointed with spiritual insight and power. The Apostle seems to speak of this as having happened once for all at conversion and (Gal. iii. 27) baptism. (R.V. more carefully renders “anointed” without “hath”; and similarly next verse, when the same Greek tense is continued.)

22. **sealed.** (See on ver. 21.) Another expression for the gift of the Spirit, *e.g.* Eph. i. 13, iv. 30. God has marked us as inviolably His own. **earnest.** Firstfruits (Rom. viii. 23). Literally, part payment of wage in advance, to ratify a bargain; like the “king’s shilling”; in Scots, “arles.” Strange as it may seem, the meaning is not that we have the beginning of the Spirit’s presence already and shall have more hereafter, but that we have the inward Spirit now and shall have visible glory hereafter.

2 Cor. i. 23–ii. 4.

THE TRUE REASON FOR HIS CHANGE  
OF PLANS.

23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to  
24 spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that  
we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your  
joy : for by faith ye stand.

ii. 1 But I determined this with myself, that I would not come  
2 again to you in heaviness. For if I make you sorry, who  
is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is  
3 made sorry by me ? And I wrote this same unto you, lest,  
when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I  
ought to rejoice ; having confidence in you all, that my  
4 joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and  
anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears ; not  
that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love  
which I have more abundantly unto you.

If he had come right across, he must have paid  
a second visit of severity, like his last sad visit to  
them ; and this he could not endure.

23. **not as yet.** This is a sheer blunder. “Not  
again” ! For the intermediate visit, see *Introd.*  
p. 30.

Ver. 24 is a parenthesis, dealing with a possible  
objection. What then ? Would my bare presence  
have meant your passive consent ? Am I such an  
autocrat ? No ; I am your helper. Faith—if your  
faith is, as I trust, genuine—makes you secure  
(in Christ).

ii. 1. **with myself.** R.V., “for myself.” What-  
ever intentions he had announced—whatever  
promises, as they might think, he had given—he



now felt it wise to decide against visiting Corinth immediately. That decision, therefore, he had taken on his own responsibility. **again . . . in heaviness** ("with sorrow," R.V.; uniform rendering). The Greek undoubtedly implies a previous visit in "sorrow," *i.e.* the intermediate visit. (Introd. p. 30). To deny this is to do violence to the evidence.

2. How could he look for happiness from them if he was saddening them?

3. **I wrote.** In the intermediate letter (Introd. p. 30). The Greek idiom might refer to the present letter, but facts forbid that interpretation (much as at 1 Cor. v. 9). **this same** may be translated "for this very purpose."—The next clause then states the converse or complement of ver. 2. He avoided causing them sorrow on a visit; he shrank from being himself filled with sorrow on a visit. **confidence.** During the darkest hour he trusted the reality of their love (comp. vii. 14; that was what he boasted to Titus). At bottom his joy made them glad all the time (and his sorrow, sad).

## 2 Cor. ii. 5-11.

### THE APOSTLE'S DESIRE FULFILLED.

5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but  
 6 in part: that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to  
 such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of  
 7 many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive  
 him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be  
 8 swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech  
 9 you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to

this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of  
 10 you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye  
 forgive any thing, I forgive also : for if I forgave any thing,  
 to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the  
 11 person of Christ ; lest Satan should get an advantage of  
 us : for we are not ignorant of his devices.

The intermediate letter, backed by Titus's representations, has done its work. A certain limited penalty has been imposed by a majority (ver. 6); others desired to see even sharper dealing with the man who had insulted Paul ("contrariwise," ver. 7), but he begs that no more may be heard of these buried troubles; extreme severity (ver. 11) is dangerous and unchristian.

5. R.V.'s translation is better : "he hath caused sorrow, not to me, but in part . . . to you all." Paul waves aside his personal grievance. **in part.** More or less, all members of the Corinthian church had come to feel grief and shame at the way in which Paul had been wronged. More or less—he will not overstate the pain caused at Corinth by the solitary and now repentant offender. Perhaps there is a slight rebuke of the church, while he spares the chief criminal? **that I may not overcharge.** "that I press not too heavily." A parenthesis, explaining why he says "in part." **you all.** *i.e.* "he has grieved you all."

6. **many.** "the many," the majority.

9. Even when he wrote the severe letter, Paul's chief concern was—Will the church obey their founder? He was sure they would; yet what a relief when he *knew* they *had* obeyed!

Ver. 10 is meant for the minority, who thought the offender had got off too easily. **ye.** Corinthians

if I forgave, *i.e.* "if I had anything to forgive." A fine expression of genuine Christian large-heartedness. **for your sakes.** The good of Christ's cause and of His people is the supreme motive.

11. Heartlessly severe church discipline overreaches itself. Our action is to be just, but abstract so-called "justice" is no sufficient defence of a policy administered by Christians. "All things edify not" (1 Cor. x. 23). "The legality which has no justice and does not even pretend to have mercy" (*Ecce Homo*) is poles asunder from the mind of Christ.

2 Cor. ii. 12, 13.

### FURTHER RESULTS OF THE CORINTHIAN WAYWARDNESS.

- 12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,  
 13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

Their waywardness had cost him, not only prolonged anxiety, but loss of one specially promising opportunity of preaching the gospel at Troas. And perhaps he had once more been called "fickle" at Corinth because, having delayed visiting them and gone to Troas, he would not stay there though the work seemed so promising.

12. **to Troas.** A seaport (Acts xvi. 9-11), the "Troy" of the *Iliad*. Paul went north through Asia Minor, while Titus travelled north through Mace-

donia to meet him. **to preach Christ's gospel.** Better, as R.V., "for the gospel of Christ." It is the usual expression ("objective genitive"); the gospel concerning Christ. He was a Christian missionary. **a door was opened.** Great opportunity (1 Cor. xvi. 9).

13. **no rest in.** "no relief for" his **spirit** because of anxiety regarding Corinth. So, that great chance for the gospel was lost!

### 2 Cor. ii. 14-17.

#### THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S HIGH CALLING.

14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his  
15 knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them  
16 that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And  
17 who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

A burst of thanks. For what? For good news through Titus (vii. 6, etc.)? Rather, for the position of a preacher of the glorious gospel, which God always welcomes, however men may take it! And, even when the gospel repels and hardens, it shows that it is alive! We still see in it the glorious if awful power of God.—The imagery is that of a Roman triumph. Many altars at street corners smoked with fragrant incense. At Christ's triumph, St. Paul is an attendant, burning incense to His glory by preaching the gospel. (Perhaps the

Judaisers had taunted Paul with the frequent failures which his scrupulous gospel had to acknowledge.)

14. **causeth us to triumph.** As sharing Christ's triumph. To think of Paul as one of Christ's *captives* does not suit the passage, though it is true enough in itself. **in every place.** Whether with success at Troas (or at Corinth) or with failure (as at Athens?).

15. Prayer is compared to incense Ps. cxli. 2, and Christ's own sacrifice Eph. v. 2. Here, the gospel is similarly described. **sweet savour,** however, is a technical term of O.T. law for burnt sacrifice as well as for incense (Lev. i. 9, 13, 17, etc. etc). **are saved.** "are being saved." **perish.** "are perishing." Neither process is as yet complete or irrevocable.

16. **the savour.** "a savour." He avoids saying "sweet savour" when he has to speak of the effect of the gospel upon those who reject it. **of death.** "from death." Like evil spirits, who hate holy things,—“The powers of darkness fear When this sweet chant they hear, May Jesus Christ be praised,”—the enemies of the gospel are precipitated towards ruin by the gospel itself. Comp. John xv. 22–25. Fragrance turning to charnel-house odours? **of life.** "from life." **who is sufficient?** Answer: No one, in himself (iii. 5, 6).

17. **For** ("others may think differently, undervaluing the task, its responsibilities, its dangers"). **corrupt.** "adulterate." The bad Judaisers at Corinth had probably lowered the moral claim of the gospel, in order to make headway against St. Paul.

## 2 Cor. iii. 1-11.

## PAUL'S CREDENTIALS.

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of  
2 commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our  
3 hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the  
4 heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: 5 not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as 6 of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the  
7 spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done  
8 away: how shall not the ministration of the spirit be 9 rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness  
10 exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that  
11 excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

The Corinthians will think, "He is praising himself again!" (as he had had to do in the intermediate letter, and as the Judaisers always kept insinuating). No; he needs no recommendations, such as the Judaisers made much of. He has written the gospel on changed hearts; these are his credentials! He is a servant of the Spirit and of the new covenant; the Judaisers are servants of



the lifeless letter, the condemning law, the imperfect older covenant. These were great in their time: how infinitely greater the service of Christ!

1. **epistles of commendation.** Unknown Christians did well to carry such things (Acts xviii. 27; Rom. xvi. 1). **to you.** When he first arrived. **from you.** On leaving; as if the Corinthians must go bail for St. Paul to other cities.—Perhaps the Judaisers had begged for such on their departure? In vain?

2. **written in our hearts.** Because he loves them. **known and read of all men.** All can recognise Paul's love to them.

3. **manifestly declared.** "made manifest." **the epistle of Christ.** Christ is the ultimate author of such "living epistles." **ministered by us.** Paul, as it were, is Christ's amanuensis. **tables of stone.** Like the O.T. law. **fleshy tables of the heart, i.e. (R.V.),** "tables that are hearts of flesh,"—renewed hearts (Prov. iii. 3; Jer. xxxi. 33; and especially Ezek. xxxvi. 26).—The imagery has now changed. The epistle is written not merely on Paul's heart, but on the Corinthians'. (There is a slight difference of reading as well as of rendering in R.V.)

4. Dare we say this (in view of the wavering of the Corinthians)? Yes; we dare **through Christ.**

5. **to think.** "to account." This is one of the catchwords of the fiery controversial chapters (x. 2, 7, 11, xi. 5, xii. 6). The Judaisers charged Paul with exaggerating his own importance. He appeals steadily to his Master. Christ keeps the score, not Paul. **of ourselves . . . of God.** "from."

6. **able ministers.** We should carry on the

rendering used in ver. 5. R.V., "sufficient as ministers." **the new testament.** "A new covenant"; with great emphasis upon "new." Note on 1 Cor. xi. 25. **the letter.** Outward conformity to God was demanded by the law. **the spirit.** Inward conformity is secured by the gospel (Rom. ii. 28, 29). **killeth.** Law condemns, to the dreadful death penalty. **the spirit.** Ultimately, this must be the Holy Spirit of God. Proximately, it is the spiritual gospel. **giveth life.** Moral life here, glorious life hereafter (1 Cor. xv. 45).

7. **ministration.** "ministry" (iv. 1); same word. **of death.** Of condemnation. **in stones.** Ver. 3. **Moses.** The mediator of the old covenant. **for the glory.** Ex. xxxiv. 29-35. **was to be done away.** "was passing away." Obviously, Moses did not carry supernatural brightness on his face all the rest of his life—that is the assumption. The parenthesis rather complicates the train of thought: if (1) the Old Testament had such glory and (2) *its glory was essentially transient*.—The conclusion comes ver. 8.

9. Second argument: the dispensation of justification and salvation must surpass in glory the dispensation of condemnation.

10. Third argument: inferior glory must be quenched by absolute glory, as starlight by sunlight.

11. Fourth argument: the parenthesis of ver. 7 repeated now as a final proof of the supremacy of Christianity over all Judaism, historic or anachronistic, open or—as by the Judaisers—concealed.

2 Cor. iii. 12-18.

### CONTRASTS OF CHRISTIANITY AND MOSAISM.

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness  
 13 of speech : and not as Moses, which put a vail over his  
     face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to  
 14 the end of that which is abolished : but their minds were  
     blinded : for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken  
     away in the reading of the old testament ; which vail is  
 15 done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when  
 16 Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless  
     when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken  
 17 away. Now the Lord is that Spirit : and where the Spirit  
 18 of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open  
     face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are  
     changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as  
     by the Spirit of the Lord.

Mosaism was a veiled revelation. In particular, the truth that it was in itself an inferior passing dispensation was not clearly admitted ; Moses himself, by covering his face till the brightness faded, masked that parable ; and just so the veil remains on Jewish hearts. This is a characteristic bit of Rabbinical exegesis (of Ex. xxxiv. 29-35), fanciful in its form, and hardly conclusive, but profound in its thoughts. The O.T. passage may admit of the interpretation Paul puts upon it—that Moses deliberately concealed the fading of the brightness (ver. 33) ; or it may simply mean that he wore a veil except when he was speaking to God or for God (ver. 34). Even ver. 16 in our passage is closely modelled upon Ex. xxxiv. 34. The O.T. says, When Moses returned to God's

presence, he laid aside the veil. Paul says, When Israel, or an individual Jew, turns to God, the veil shall be put away (by God). And (he adds) we Christians have no veil between us and God, whether on face or on heart; perfect revelation, perfect progressive transformation; every man a Moses, worshipping "face to face" (Num. xii. 8; see notes on 1 Cor. xiii. 12).

12. **plainness.** "boldness," in appealing to God, and in facing all the facts of His service (ii. 15, 16).

13. **and not.** Best with R.V., "and are not as Moses." **is abolished.** "was passing away,"—the radiance on his face.

14. **blinded.** R.V., "hardened." It is disputed whether this change is necessary, or whether the two Greek words had come to be laxly identified. "Blinded" makes the smoother sense. **old testament.** Here (for the first time) used almost as we use it, for the *scriptures* of the old "Covenant." The word means either covenant or testament (*i.e.* "will"). Covenant—God's appointment—is the original Bible sense and proper translation. **which veil.** Many prefer to translate "Because" (not "which") "the veil is done away" (only) in Christ.

17. **the Lord.** Christ; see 1 Cor. xv. 45. This to us, schooled in Christian dogma, is an unusual expression: Christ identified with the Spirit. (He is *Giver* of the Spirit and present in and with His gift.) **Spirit of the Lord.** This is the expression we are more accustomed to. **liberty.** In contrast to the servile bondage of law. Here especially, freedom from that hampering veil.

18. **we.** Christians. **all.** Not only teachers or apostles. **open.** "unveiled." **beholding.**

Better, "reflecting." glass. See 1 Cor. xiii. 12. **of the Lord.** Primarily, of Christ. **from glory to glory.** Stage by stage. **by.** "from"; the source of the transforming power is indicated, rather than the agent in transformation. **the Spirit of the Lord.** This translation is inconsistent with the order of the words. Some have translated "the Lord of the Spirit." Best, "the Lord who is the Spirit"; see ver. 17.

2 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

### TRUE AND FALSE MINISTRY.

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Contrast of true Christian service with sham ministrations (like the Judaisers?). (There are two ways of going to work: the way of cunning, of economy, of reserve—managing men for their own good (or so it is said); and the way of frankness—acknowledging difficulties but appealing to the conscience. The latter, according to Paul, is the only Christian method.)

2. **dishonesty.** Modern English, "shame."

2 Cor. iv. 3-6.

### LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:  
4 in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of

them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto  
 5 them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the  
 6 Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Contrast between Christian light and the darkness of ruined souls. This is an ultimate mystery and abiding sorrow. All men have not faith. By God's mercy alone, we have it.

3. **hid.** "veiled." The veil returns, alas, after all! **lost.** "perishing" (ii. 15 and note).

4. **the god of this world.** Satan (Eph. ii. 2; John xii. 31). **world** is literally "age"; Satan's reign is contrasted with the coming reign of Christ. **blinded.** Not the doubtful word found iii. 14. **glorious gospel.** Literally "gospel of the glory." **image of God.** We cannot see God in His absoluteness (John i. 18); but we see the image of the Invisible (Col. i. 15). And so we know God. **shine unto him:** R.V., literally and finely, "dawn upon him." ("Now the beauty of Thy face In radiant vision dawns on me"; Matson's *Lord, I was blind.*)

5. **not ourselves.** As the taunting Judaisers alleged. **the Lord.** "as Lord." **your servants.** "as your servants" in Christ; that, says St. Paul, is his position.

6. "Seeing it is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts . . ." (Two small differences in reading.) See Gen. i. 3. Paul thinks of his own conversion, when he saw the uncreated light. But he puts it in line with



all true conversions, in which God opens blind eyes. Here, conversion is referred directly to God; at iii. 16 it is referred primarily to a change in the human will. We must hold both truths, even if we cannot show in detail how they harmonise.

2 Cor. iv. 7-18.

### DEFENCE AGAINST SLANDER.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the  
8 excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We  
are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are  
9 perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not for-  
10 saken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing  
about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life  
11 also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For  
we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus'  
sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in  
12 our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in  
13 you. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is  
written, *I believed, and therefore have I spoken*; we also  
14 believe, and therefore speak; knowing that he which  
raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus,  
15 and shall present us with you. For all things are for your  
sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanks-  
16 giving of many redound to the glory of God. For which  
cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish,  
17 yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light  
affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far  
18 more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we  
look not at the things which are seen, but at the things  
which are not seen: for the things which are seen are  
temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

The Apostle had no doubt been slandered

because of his illnesses. Did these look like "glory," or even like goodness? God's favourites are differently treated! Paul replies—It is God's preference to work through frail invalids like me, that all spiritual results may visibly be His. More than this, Paul has to announce the probability of his own death before Christ's Advent; in contrast to his instinctive language at 1 Thess. iv. 17 and 1 Cor. xv. 52. (There seems also a contrast to 2 Cor. i. 9-11. Did he not there give thanks, that the resurrection-God had delivered him and would deliver him?—Still, if he had died then, he must have died in despair. It is another thing to die comforted and fully conformed to Christ.)

**7. earthen vessels.** Pottery. (A different word from 1 Cor. xv. 47.) **of us.** "from ourselves."

**9. persecuted.** "pursued." The word has not the technical sense of persecution. **cast down.** R.V., "smitten down." Not mere dejection, as Ps. xlii. 6. Rather compare Mic. vii. 8.

Ver. 11 repeats ver. 10, "explaining the first clause"—risk, or approach, of death to St. Paul for "dying of Jesus,"—and "emphasising the second clause," **mortal flesh**, for "body."

**12.** There is just a touch of sarcasm here. **death.** Bodily. **life.** Spiritual life here and now, with the added promise of bodily glory hereafter.

**13. the same.** As the Corinthians have? If so, another touch of sarcasm. More likely, the same as the Psalmist had. **written.** Ps. cxvi. 10 (in the Greek; A.V. altered the Hebrew text to match Paul's quotation. Comp. Ps. cxvi. R.V.). **we speak.** Undismayed by approaching death.

14. **raise up.** He has said it now! He expects to be among the departed, the sleepers, when Jesus returns. **by Jesus.** Translate "with Jesus." Because of the mystical union with the Saviour. **with you.** The happy living surviving Christians of Corinth (and elsewhere).

15. God covets their thankfulness: let them see that they do not ignore His gifts; *e.g.* in Paul.

16. **perish.** "is decaying." **the inward man.** "our inward man"; spiritual and moral renewal, the prophecy of immortality.

17. **a far more exceeding.** "more and more exceedingly an . . ."

18. **we look.** By faith.

## 2 Cor. v. 1-10.

### THE CHRISTIAN HOPE IN DEATH.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not  
 2 made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we  
 groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our  
 3 house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed  
 4 we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this  
 tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we  
 would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality  
 5 might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought  
 us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given  
 6 unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are  
 always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home  
 7 in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk  
 8 by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and  
 willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be  
 9 present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that,

whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.  
10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

This passage states the general Christian hope of immortality and resurrection, in such terms as naturally present themselves to a believer, who is for the first time accepting the thought of death, in place of the fuller hope of survival till Christ's return. He is willing even for death: it, even it, brings its gain.—Perhaps there is more than this. All speech, even inspired speech, about the hereafter must be approximate and suggestive rather than rigorously exact. In 1 Thess. iv. and 1 Cor. xv., St. Paul's words, though not making any direct affirmation on the point, have suggested that the blessed life of the future age will be spent on a renewed earth, the body "rising" from the grave. Here, it may be, (1) Paul speaks rather of "going to heaven" (ver. 1), as our modern phrase runs; or else (2), as others think—wherever the post-resurrection life is conceived, in paradise or on the earth—he describes the spiritual body, not as emerging from the grave by a transforming miracle of Divine power, but as ready now in heaven, and comforts himself in prospect of dying with the hope of at once putting on that spiritual body. But this second view would involve too violent a break with the Apostle's former teaching. Moreover, that is not really the comfort he speaks of: his comfort is that death will bring him near Christ, into Christ's very presence (ver. 8). True, there is a variant reading in

ver. 3, which, by change of one letter in the Greek, says "if being *unclothed*," *i.e.* by death, "we yet shall not be naked," *i.e.* having at once put on the resurrection body. Yet the weight of evidence is against this reading, and, as we have seen, ver. 8 does not bear it out. Dismissing (2), therefore, we need not recognise any further development (in this passage) in St. Paul's teaching regarding the hereafter than is involved in (1). Compare with our passage Rom. viii. 19-27; Phil. i. 22, 23. And see Introd. p. 13.

1. **we know.** Paul is not conscious of giving new theological teaching. He knows; they know. **our.** The word is loosely placed in the Greek; and **this** is introduced by the translators of A.V. R.V., "if the earthly house of our tabernacle." **tabernacle.** "tent." This body of mortal flesh (1 Cor. xv. 50) is not a permanent home but a makeshift. A house! Nay rather; a tent. **a building.** Heaven as our home? (1), above. Or else, the spiritual body, which will last. **of God.** From God. **not made with hands.** Even the body we now wear has surely a more mysterious origin than any human handiwork! Perhaps St. Paul's meaning is explained by a parallel in Heb. (ix. 11, R.V.)—"not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation." In 2 Cor. v. St. Paul certainly comes nearer than usual to the Alexandrian idealism of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The present and the future body, world, life are contrasted: the present, a shadow; the future, the solid reality.

2. **in this.** Most simply, "in this tabernacle"; see ver. 4. But the meaning may be "Because of *this*"; "*This* is the reason why" **we groan.**

from heaven. At Christ's Advent, bodies from heaven will clothe and transform living saints.

4. **burdened.** Why? No parallel elsewhere. Probably, by the whole weight of mortal cares. **not**, etc. Most probably, Not that we desire like Greek Platonists to die and escape from a body, but to live on till we are peacefully and blessedly "changed" (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52).

5. **for the selfsame thing** ("for this very thing"). That we might yearn after a higher state of being. (Not: that we might prefer transformation to death. That is a self-evident human preference, in which our heavenly Father has no special interest.) **earnest.** i. 22 and note.

6. **we are.** R.V., following the more awkward (and so more probable) reading, "being." Meaning is unchanged. **confident.** "of good courage."

7. We have to understand this verse in what one is tempted to call the lower sense. Christians live just now *only* by faith, not by full vision. (Tennyson to James Knowles: "My chief longing is for a clearer vision of God.") The "higher" sense is found substantially a few verses back (iv. 18); we look at spiritual things, not at the things of sense.

8. **we.** He means himself here. **confident.** Ver. 6. **present.** R.V., "at home," — uniform with ver. 6, and an immense improvement. The Christian has two loyalties. His body clings to earth; his heart clings to heaven and Christ. Until the day when God makes all things new, there can be no all-round satisfaction for Christian instincts. But our anchor in the unseen world, whether after resurrection or in what some call "the



intermediate state," is the assurance of being with Christ. "It's enough that Christ knows all, And I shall be with Him." Yes, it is enough. Paul feels sure that even death, bringing us nearer Christ, must mean gain. The assurance is still warmer Phil. i. 21, 23.

9. **we labour.** "we make it our ambition." It does not matter where Christ's Advent finds us; but oh! it matters how it finds us, and what He judges concerning us. **present** ("at home") or **absent**. Which is which, here? Does he speak from the point of view of body, and earth, or of soul, heaven, and Christ? The sense is unchanged; he speaks of both in one breath. Perhaps he is back at the bodily standpoint. It could hardly be doubted concerning a saint, contemplated as "with Christ" and "at home," whether he had been accepted. **accepted of him.** "well-pleasing unto him." It is not fair to say (like Bousset) that Paul implies the existence of Christian service, reward, perhaps punishment, in the life of "the intermediate state" after death. As ver. 10 tells us, it is things done "in the body" that Christ will praise or blame. We know nothing about service in the intermediate state, and had better not speculate on the point.

10. **appear.** "be made manifest" (ver. 11). The judgments passed there will be absolutely true and just. Our real state will be made plain to ourselves and others, when Christ speaks. **of Christ.** Judgment is one of many things which are described now as exercised by God the Father (*e.g.* Rom. xiv. 12), now by Christ the Lord.—It is not easy to harmonise intellectually judgment by works and justification by faith. But judgment

to come is a primary Christian truth, which even St. Paul, the great exponent of justification by faith, repeats with solemn emphasis.

2 Cor. v. 11-19.

VINDICATION OF HIMSELF AND HIS  
GOSPEL.

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust  
12 also are made manifest in your consciences. For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and  
13 not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.  
14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus  
15 judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died  
16 for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him  
17 no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things  
18 are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given  
19 to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

With apparent suddenness, Paul turns to self-vindication. The battle between him and the Judaisers had been keen, and he had felt that

more than his reputation was at stake, even the gospel itself.

11. **terror.** "fear." It is the ordinary word for fear, though here used specially of fear before the judge. In this solemn sense of responsibility, he carries on his ministry. **persuade men.** As if he would say, Men, we can but do our best to persuade; God knows us. Perhaps this "persuasiveness" had been imputed to him as something underhand and unworthy. In an obscure verse (Gal. i. 10) he disclaims "persuading" men (and see 1 Cor. ii. 4); here, however, he admits it, in his own sense. Similarly, he repudiates (Gal. i. 10) and admits (1 Cor. x. 33) the charge of "pleasing" men (though there is no word "men" in the Greek of 1 Cor. x. 33). **made manifest to God** (all the time!). Same word as ver. 10. **in your consciences.** His converts too know, or ought to know, what he really is.

12. He is not bragging idly: he is telling them how to defend him when the Judaisers slander him and insinuate dangerous doctrines. **not in heart.** The real inmost things; comp. Rom. ii. 29.

13. Some critics had said, "He is mad." Others, "Mad? Not he! He is cunning; he knows very well what he is about." Paul replies, If I am mad, it is a Divine madness; if I am prudent, it is unselfish moral prudence.

14. **love of Christ** might mean either love to Christ or Christ's love to us. Parallels (Gal. ii. 20; Eph. v. 2) favour the nobler sense. But indeed that great love must kindle love in us, if it is to reach us truly. **constraineth us.** All the time, in seemingly opposite manifestations (ver. 13). **because we thus judge.** Literally "judged," *i.e.*

at our conversion. But those who are "constrained" habitually by Christ's love renew that "judgment" from day to day. **were all dead.** "all died." In and with Christ, by a moral necessity, we broke with the past (Rom. vi. 10, 11). His death made certain the moral dying to sin and living to God of all true disciples.

15. The mystical union which last verse implies is now stated in moral terms. Christ's purpose, recognised by Christ's people, becomes their own motive. **for them** belongs equally to the words **died and rose again.** The risen Christ is the power of the new life in Christians.

16. **(no man) after the flesh.** According to ordinary worldly terms of thought and motive. **Christ after the flesh.** Some take this as implying that Paul had once or twice casually seen Jesus during His earthly life. More probably he points towards his former Jewish notions about the Messiah. Comp. Phil. iii. 5, 6—other ideas "according to the flesh" with which he had broken. Or he thinks of the Judaisers (x. 7).

17. **he is a new creature.** R.V.m., "there is a new creation." **all things.** Not in the best MSS; R.V., "they." (Old things are gone—or wholly changed and made new.) When one gets a new heart and a new God, one enters a new universe.

18. *A Divine universe!* **of God.** "from God." **hath reconciled us.** "reconciled us." St. Paul contemplates obstacles on God's side and on man's. Both are swept away by the (God-initiated) work of Christ. On man's side, dislike and distrust have to be changed into adoring faith. Christ's finished work implies that change

(vers. 14, 15); but it reaches its result through the great Christian ministry (in the widest sense) of reconciliation. **by (Jesus Christ).** "through."

**19. to wit that.** "for" would give the correct meaning more briefly. **God.** The final author of salvation. **the world.** And not merely an election out of the world. **trespasses.** This is the barrier, so far as God's will is concerned. He cannot hold that wilful unrepented sin is the same thing as obedience. Nor does the N.T. favour the belief that human repentance, by itself, is all that is required to reconcile God. The barrier disappears in Christ!

2 Cor. v. 20, 21.

### THE KERNEL OF THE GOSPEL.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be  
21 ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Paul solemnly restates the imperilled kernel of the gospel—see on vers. 11–19—and appeals to the Corinthians to accept it. If we heard of judgment by works at ver. 10, now it is the turn of justification by faith.

**20. for Christ.** "on behalf of Christ." in **Christ's stead.** "on behalf of Christ."—There is no excuse for varying the translation.

**21. he hath made.** "he made"—once for all, in the great sacrifice. **to be sin.** This is the strongest of all St. Paul's statements of the doctrine of Atonement. Christ died the cursed

death due to sin, Christ the sinless! Thus and thus only did the barrier (ver. 19) disappear. **knew no sin.** Did no sin, and did not enter into the chaotic world of a sinner's mind. **righteousness of God.** For the moment, imputed and not imparted righteousness is in Paul's mind. We may have forgiveness, *in Christ.*

## 2 Cor. vi. 1-13.

## THE TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF AN APOSTLE.

We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also  
2 that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, *I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee*: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)  
3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not  
4 blamed: but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in  
5 necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in  
6 tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy  
7 Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right  
8 hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil  
9 report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we  
10 live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having  
11 nothing, and yet possessing all things. O ye Corinthians,  
12 our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your  
13 own bowels. Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.



The apostolic ministry, as Paul exercised it, with scrupulous care to avoid all real offence. In a rhetorical outburst like this, we must not look for strict sequence of thought. After quoting or adapting a great saying addressed to the Servant of the Lord in Isa. xlix., Paul speaks of his own patient endurance. First, three sets of trials arranged in threes (vers. 4b, 5); then two fours (or four twos) of the spiritual endowments which carry him through (vers. 6, 7a); a transition clause, referring to spiritual armour offensive and defensive (ver. 7b); then a set of paradoxical antitheses, nine in number (vers. 8–10). Lastly, he urges his love and appeals for a full return (vers. 11–13).

1. **workers together with him.** 1 Cor. iii. 9. **beseech you also,** *i.e.* “we also beseech”; see v. 20. **in vain.** “vain” here as at 1 Cor. xv. (14).—This is the markedly new point in the verse. Two things may make God’s grace “in vain”—love of sin, or explaining away the essence of the gospel. The latter, the poison of the Judaisers, is probably in view here; see next verse.

2. Isa. xlix. 8 speaks of the **day of salvation** or of “deliverance” from oppression, for Israel, when God will “help” His great “Servant.” For St. Paul, salvation means especially deliverance from God’s wrath at the Judgment Day (Rom. v. 9; also 1 Thess. i. 10, v. 9, 10, with notes there). In the “short” **now** (1 Cor. vii. 31) we must lay hold of this great salvation.

3. **offence.** “occasion of stumbling.” Not merely what is disagreeable to others’ feelings; what tempts them, or hinders right-doing. **the ministry.** The gospel ministry of reconciliation (v. 18). **blamed.** Justly and reasonably blamed.

4. **ministers.** Greek, "deacons." The word is not yet specialised of a single church office. **afflictions,** etc. Three general expressions for the troubles of his lot. (Compare with this passage xi. 23, etc.)

5. **stripes . . . imprisonments . . . tumults.** Troubles caused by human enemies. **labours,** etc. Growing more directly out of his apostolic duty. **fastings.** Not ritual, or self-disciplinary, but sheer inevitable hunger.

7. **on the right hand.** For offence. **on the left.** For defence.

8. **by (honour).** Same word hitherto rendered "in"; "amid" would give the sense. **deceivers.** Sarcastic. His enemies called him that.

9. **dying,** etc. Comp. i. 8-10. **chastened,** etc. Ps. cxviii. 18.

10. **rich.** Spiritually. **possessing.** By faith, and in hope. — General result; affliction does not discredit, but rather accredits a minister of Christ!

11. **our mouth is open.** From Ps. cxix. 131. **heart . . . enlarged.** From Ps. cxix. 32. Comp. Matt. xii. 34b.

12. **straitened.** Put in a *narrow* place (comp. "strait gate," Matt. vii. 13) by lack of love on St. Paul's part. **in your own bowels.** ("In yourselves, alas, there is still something of such loveless narrowness.") Ancient psychology located emotions in the "soft parts of the body" (Lotze), because of certain physiological feelings known to all. R.V., with modern decorum, "in your own affections."

13. **in the same.** In affection.

2 Cor. vi. 14-vii. 1.

THE CHRISTIAN'S AVOIDANCE OF  
TEMPTATIONS:

- 14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers : for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?  
 15 and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath  
 16 he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, *I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall*  
 17 *be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate,* saith the Lord, *and touch not the*  
 18 *unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters,* saith the Lord Almighty.
- vii. 1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Christians must avoid all sin and all undue mixture with non-Christians ; a command supported by many O.T. quotations.—This does indeed point to one way of “receiving grace . . . in vain” (vi. 1), but it hardly seems to lie in the line of the Apostle’s argument, while vii. 2 would fit on well to vi. 13. The conjecture (Intro. p. 23) that this passage is a fragment of the lost early epistle to Corinth mentioned at 1 Cor. v. 9 is plausible, though hardly capable of proof.

14. **unequally yoked.** Like, *e.g.*, an ox and ass ploughing together. O.T. law (Deut. xxii. 10) forbade that.

15. **Belial.** An O.T. expression of unknown

origin. In N.T. Belial is a name for the Devil, or sometimes—possibly here—for Antichrist (comp. *Introd.* pp. 11, 17, etc., and 2 Thess. ii. 4 with note).

16. **idols.** Compare the polemic in 1 Cor. x. **ye.** R.V. reads “we,” — all Christians. **I will dwell in them.** Lev. xxvi. 11 freely quoted. **walk in them.** This, to end of verse, is verbally from Lev. xxvi. 12.

17. **come out from among them.** Jer. li. 45 (with “her” for “them”). The verse as a whole—to “no unclean thing”; so R.V.—is an application of the words of Isa. lii. 11. (But there is no “saith the Lord” in the O.T. passage.) **I will receive you** occurs Ezek. xx. 34, 41 (LXX).

18. Compare the promise to the Davidic (or perhaps rather, the Messianic) king, 2 Sam. vii. 14. **sons and daughters** occurs Isa. xliii. 6 (but not “sons and daughters of God”). **saith the Lord Almighty** (Hebrew, “Lord of hosts”) occurs in the Greek Bible (LXX) at Amos iv. 13. Except here, Revelation—with its strongly Jewish colouring—alone in N.T. uses the title “Almighty.”

vii. 1. **filthiness.** “defilement,” i.e. what defiles either body or *soul*. **holiness.** Consecration.

## 2 Cor. vii. 2-4.

### A PERSONAL APPEAL TO THE CORINTHIANS.

- 2 Receive us ; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted  
3 no man, we have defrauded no man. I speak not this to  
condemn you : for I have said before, that ye are in our  
4 hearts to die and live with you. Great is my boldness of

speech toward you, great is my glorying of you : I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

These verses conclude the appeal to the Corinthians (vi. 11-13).

2. **Receive us.** Literally "Make wider room for us" (vi. 11, 12). R.V., "Open your hearts to us." **wronged**, etc. Such charges must have been insinuated against St. Paul, and must have been listened to at Corinth with an unworthy tolerance.

3. But he will not say anything more to recall their past errors. He loves them too well.

4. **boldness.** As at iii. 4. Not the word of v. 6, 8, which meets us again x. 2. **of you.** "on your part."—We should note the change from "we" to "I" without change of meaning. Comp. 1 Thess. i. 1, ii. 18.

## 2 Cor. vii. 5-16.

### CHANGED PERSONAL RELATIONS.

5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side ; without were  
6 fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the  
7 coming of Titus ; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent  
8 mind toward me ; so that I rejoiced the more. For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent : for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.

- 9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in  
10 nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the  
11 world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.  
12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of  
13 God might appear unto you. Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by  
14 you all. For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is  
15 found a truth. And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you  
16 all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.

Conclusion of the first part of the Epistle (Intro. p. 31). Narrative—his continued sorrow “even” (ver. 5, R.V.) in Macedonia; his joy when Titus brought good news. Joy? When the letter Titus had carried to them had caused such pain? Yes indeed, because it had ended so well. All he had aimed at, in the letter, was that they might understand their own real love to Paul, and do the right thing. Besides, how happy Titus himself had been made by his



visit! Just as Paul, even in the black days, had told him it would prove. All is indeed well now!

5. **flesh.** The weak part of the personality. He said "spirit" at ii. 13 because there he was describing how anxiety hindered his spiritual work. **fightings.** Unknown to us. It has been suggested there may be a hint of them i. 10 ("will yet deliver us"! ). **fears.** Not least the fears, which shot across his hopes, of how things were going at Corinth.

6. **those that are cast down.** R.V., "the lowly." Literal, but a doubtful improvement.

7. **the consolation wherewith he was comforted;** which in itself cheered St. Paul. **earnest desire.** "longing." **fervent mind.** "zeal." **the more.** The mere sight of Titus, or the first impression he made, was a relief; his fuller tidings brought a fuller relief.

8. But can he talk of joy, in considering that terrible letter he sent them? (Not a letter; "the" letter; "my" letter, *Introd.* p. 30.) Yes; it is impossible to regret the transaction.—It may be best to adopt a different punctuation: "I do not repent. Though I did repent [formerly; and, as I now perceive, not without grounds]—for I see [from what Titus tells me] that my epistle caused you bitter grief for a little space—now I rejoice," etc. Perhaps Dr. Massie is right, that Paul is thinking of two griefs—the angry vexation which Paul had half divined (and at the thought of which he half wished he had written differently: "I did repent!") and which came for a season, and the deeper, worthier, lasting mood of repentance. Only, the passage leaves us to guess this. It is obscure. Some have proposed con-

jectural alterations of the words, but with no striking gain.

9. **damage.** Their grief, as it developed, revealed itself as being no injury inflicted on them, but rather a blessing.

10. **salvation.** In the deep Pauline sense (vi. 2). **death.** Eternal death; utter ruin.

11. **carefulness.** Deep and proper concern. **indignation.** At those insults to Paul which previously they had been treating so lightly. **fear.** For the church's future. **vehement desire.** "longing," as at ver. 7; same word. **revenge.** "avenging." Serious disciplinary measures (ii. 6). **clear.** Modern English, "pure." Only by implication or by metaphor does it mean "clear of blame."

12. **his . . . that suffered wrong.** Paul himself. (Intro. p. 30.) **our care for you.** But we must read with R.V., "your care for us"; and we must alter what follows—"might be made manifest unto you in the sight of God." See note at head of paragraph.

13. **your comfort.** R.V., reading "our comfort," has to put the semicolon at "comforted"; going on, "and in our comfort we joyed," etc. **exceedingly the more.** A third gladness: Titus's happiness.

15. Titus further had grown so full of love towards the Corinthians.

## 2 Cor. viii. 1-15.

### ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE COLLECTION.

Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God 2 bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their

deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.  
 3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their  
 4 power they were willing of themselves; praying us with  
 much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take  
 upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.  
 5 And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their  
 own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.  
 6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so  
 7 he would also finish in you the same grace also. Therefore,  
 as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and  
 knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us,  
 8 see that ye abound in this grace also. I speak not by  
 commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of  
 9 others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. For ye  
 know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he  
 was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye  
 10 through his poverty might be rich. And herein I give my  
 advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun  
 before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.  
 11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was  
 a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out  
 12 of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing  
 mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not  
 13 according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other  
 14 men be eased, and ye burdened: but by an equality, that  
 now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their  
 want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your  
 15 want: that there may be equality: as it is written, *He*  
*that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had*  
*gathered little had no lack.*

The Macedonians have done nobly towards the  
 collection for Jerusalem; the Corinthians, who  
 first started the idea (in the West?) of active  
 participation,—started it perhaps in the question to  
 which Paul replies, 1 Cor. xvi. 1,—must now play

their part. Titus has gladly undertaken to revisit them, and to renew his services in this matter (ver. 6). And what motives there are for liberality!

1. **do you to wit.** "make known to you." **Macedonia.** Churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea; perhaps elsewhere.

2. **trial.** R.V., "proof." Their Christian constancy has been severely *tested*. **riches.** Christian joy and outward poverty have combined to "rich" liberality. A fine paradox! Comp. Mark xii. 43.

3. **were willing of themselves.** R.V., "gave of their own accord."

4. **that we would receive.** Better MSS and R.V. omit these words. What the Corinthians begged for was "this privilege, and a share in ministering to the" Jerusalem "saints"; see 1 Cor. xvi. 1.

5. **not as we hoped.** Not simply in reponse to Paul's personal wishes, but from the highest motives, of love to Christ, and to His servants for His sake.

Ver. 6 intimates Paul's wish, and Titus's promise, that the latter should at once return to Corinth. **had begun.** R.V., more exactly, "had made a beginning before,"—possibly when 1 Corinthians was sent off, if Titus (as several scholars have conjectured) was the bearer of that letter. Another reference to that early visit, xii. 18; see note there. Since then, things had gone wrong at Corinth, and the collection had dropped out of sight. **the same grace also.** Better "this grace also"—i.e. as well as other Christian qualities, which, at his more recent visit (vii. 7; Introd. p. 30), Titus had succeeded (by God's blessing) in reviving.

7. The list of virtues is chiefly intellectual, and therefore recalls 1 Cor. i. 5, etc. But Paul is now able to add recognition of their love to him. ("our love to you," R.V. margin, is a reading which has less MS. support, and which surely is less suitable!)

8. **not by** ("way of") **commandment**. Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 25. "Commandments" mainly go back to "the Lord," *i.e.* to the words of Jesus. **and to prove**. Rather, "testing also." The Macedonians have done well. Will the Corinthians do worse? The question inevitably arises!

9. The highest motive of all. **he was rich**. In heavenly glory (Phil. ii. 6). **became poor**. In the conditions of manhood.

10. **my advice**. R.V., "my judgement," as at 1 Cor. vii. 25, 40. Literally "an opinion." **expedient**. What he advises is best for them. (Not; to advise rather than command is best for them.) **to be forward**. "to will." The very idea of the collection was (in this region?) first broached among the Corinthians. Some, thinking this a curious turn of speech, alter the text—"not indeed to act but to will," *i.e.* "to plan." Without authority, and not absolutely necessary. **a year ago**. R.V. takes correctly with "were the first to make a beginning" (its improved rendering of **have begun before**), not with "to will" (to be forward).

11. **out of that which ye have**. God's demands are reasonably measured out (ver. 12).

13, 14. Jerusalem may do as much for them by and by.—Differently put, Rom. xv. 27; Jerusalem has already done the greatest thing for Gentiles in sending them the gospel.

15. **written.** Ex. xvi. 18. What miracle effected in regard to the manna, love is to effect freely among Christians—an equalising of (burdens and) privileges.

2 Cor. viii. 16-24.

THE DEPUTATION TO CORINTH.

16 But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care  
 17 into the heart of Titus for you. For indeed he accepted  
 the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own  
 18 accord he went unto you. And we have sent with him the  
 brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the  
 19 churches; and not that only, but who was also chosen of  
 the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is  
 administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and  
 20 declaration of your ready mind: avoiding this, that no  
 man should blame us in this abundance which is administered  
 21 by us: providing for honest things, not only in the sight  
 22 of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. And we have  
 sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes  
 proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent,  
 23 upon the great confidence which I have in you. Whether  
 any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper  
 concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are  
 the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.  
 24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the  
 proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

These verses deal with the *personnel* of the deputation to Corinth—Titus and two unnamed “brothers.” One or both of these may be in the list Acts xx. 4, which *probably* records the names of church delegates going to Jerusalem with Paul in charge of the collection. The two un-



named brothers cannot have been Macedonians (ix. 4).

17. **more forward.** Modern English, "very earnest." Titus was more than willing to yield to Paul's wish, and return to Corinth on this business.

18. **the brother** cannot be identified. Not one of Paul's immediate circle, like the brother of ver. 22. Literally Titus's brother? Absurd! "Brother" in N.T. means "Christian," unless such words as "according to the flesh" are added.

19. **chosen.** Literally, by show of hands. How, or when, we do not know. **this grace.** The money gift called forth by God's grace from the Gentile churches. **to the glory of the Lord.** (Omit **same.**) These words are best connected with "appointed"; compare next verse (**to the declaration of your ready mind.** Better, MSS and R.V., "our," not "your,"—"our readiness." Perhaps, "(appointed) to satisfy my earnest desire." Again compare next verse.

21. **honest.** "honourable." He will seem as well as be right.

22. This **brother**—absurdly (comp. ver. 18) taken by some as Paul's physical brother—cannot be identified further than as a tried comrade of his, and *probably* (next verse) also a delegate. Paul's own selection? Interesting to the Corinthians as "representing" another church? Anyhow, Paul sends at least one church delegate. It was high time Corinth made its collection in earnest. **I have in you.** A.V. margin and R.V. fill in differently: "he hath in you."

23. **of Titus.** "about Titus." **the glory of Christ.** We might render—if awkwardly—"a

glory of Christ's." Christian men, representing the heavenly Master as well as the sister churches on earth.

2 Cor. ix. 1-5.

THE PLEA FOR PROMPTITUDE.

For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous  
 2 for me to write to you : for I know the forwardness of  
 your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia,  
 that Achaia was ready a year ago ; and your zeal hath pro-  
 3 voked very many. Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our  
 boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf ; that, as I  
 4 said, ye may be ready : lest haply if they of Macedonia  
 come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say  
 not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.  
 5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren,  
 that they would go before unto you, and make up before-  
 hand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the  
 same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of  
 covetousness.

Why does Paul write further on the point ? He has no need (ver. 1) to convince Achaian churches of the propriety of the collection ! The explanation is this : he wishes further to urge the need of promptitude. In the past he had skilfully used Achaia to stir up Macedonia ; now, not less skilfully, he uses Macedonia to renew the zeal of Achaia. This meets the doubt whether Paul wrote chap. ix. (Intro. p. 32 note).

2. **was ready.** Perhaps " has been making preparations " is an adequate translation. Achaia was scarcely " ready " in the full sense even yet (viii. 10).  
**a year ago.** " for a year past." **provoked.** Better, in modern English, " stirred up."

3. **behalf.** "respect."

4. **they of Macedonia.** Better, "any Macedonians."

5. Still, as 1 Cor. xvi. 2, Paul declines to put his own hand to the work of collecting. **whereof . . . before.** R.V., "aforepromised." **covetousness** is literal. R.V., with doubtful gain, "extortion." The gifts must not seem to be wrung out of them.

## 2 Cor. ix. 6-15.

### COMMENDATION OF LIBERALITY.

6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also  
7 bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart,<sup>s</sup> so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for  
8 God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all suffi-  
9 ciency in all things, may abound to every good work: (as it is written, *He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to*  
10 *the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.* Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the  
11 fruits of your righteousness;) being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanks-  
12 giving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also  
13 by many thanksgivings unto God; whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal  
14 distribution unto them, and unto all men; and by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding  
15 grace of God in you. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

Commendation of liberality as a Christian grace ; joy in the prospect of the good which the gift will do ; thanks to God for the Christian character of the Corinthians.

7. **God loveth**, etc. Prov. xxii. 8 (in the LXX ; inserted as an extra clause at end of the verse).

8. **all grace**. Here, probably, all good worldly gifts. **every good work**. Probably, every act of liberality.

9. Ps. cxii. 9. **righteousness**. Prosperity ; the proof of God's favour and of the righteous character God loves. (Another suggestion is that Paul applies the Psalmist's words to God. *He* disperses ! *He* gives to the poor ! Over ingenious.)

10. **seed . . . food**. Isa. lv. 10. **seed sown**. R.V., better in sense and context, "seed for sowing." **fruits of your righteousness**. Hos. x. 12 (LXX).

11. **being enriched**, *i.e.* "ye being enriched" (R.V.). **through us**. Through Paul, the founder of the collection ; it is a "ministry" he prizes. (Others : through us men, weak men, glory may thus accrue to God.)

13. **experiment**. "proving" or "test" (of the Corinthians' Christian character). **your professed subjection**. R.V., more literally and more significantly, "the obedience of your confession." The Jewish churches will see that Gentile faith—"confession"—is a real Christianity or "obedience" to the "gospel," and will love their fellow-Christians (ver. 14).

14. **for (the exceeding grace)**. "by reason of."

15. When we think of Paul's anxieties and fears for Corinth, we may well take the **unspeakable**

gift to be their real Christian character, including liberality, but including much more. Titus's reports not only eased Paul's heart, but showed the Corinthian church to be truly Christian! An "unspeakable" blessing! This goes better with the context, perhaps, than a reference to God's one matchless gift of Christ.

## 2 Cor. x.

## PAUL AT BAY.

Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you,  
 2 but being absent am bold toward you : but I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which  
 3 think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh :  
 4 (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds ;) casting  
 5 down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into  
 6 captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when  
 7 your obedience is fulfilled. Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he  
 8 is Christ's, even so are we Christ's. For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction,  
 9 I should not be ashamed : that I may not seem as if I  
 10 would terrify you by letters. For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful ; but his bodily presence is weak,  
 11 and his speech contemptible. Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent,

12 such will we be also in deed when we are present. For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a  
14 measure to reach even unto you. For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching  
15 the gospel of Christ: not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by  
16 you according to our rule abundantly, to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in  
17 another man's line of things made ready to our hand. But  
18 he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

On the difficult question of the last four chapters (up to xiii. 10), see *Intro* p. 31. Whatever the exact date of their composition, St. Paul, probably writing with his own hand, turns upon his enemies and critics, and rebukes the half-hearted loyalty of the church as a whole. Does he seem to them base, or lowly? Christ was meek! And he will find "boldness" for such tasks as duty lays upon him. He is not only weak flesh; God's power works through him victoriously. Even if he is to be judged by externals, he need not fear comparison with the Judaisers. He also is Christ's. He has Christ's authority. And in the future he will prove quite as vigorous when he is on the spot as when he is writing letters from a distance. Certainly he will not rival the Judaisers in bragging; but still



less will he cede Corinth to them. Corinth is part of his God-given province. He got there first. And—when the Corinthians are again truly his friends—he hopes to go farther, and break up more new ground; he has no proselytising pleasure in ready-made victories! But how dangerous all this boasting is! We must boast in God. Only Christ's praise counts.

1. **I Paul myself.** Possibly the Judaisers had insinuated that Paul's amanuenses really composed the epistles. So, when he turns to smite them hip and thigh, he will do every bit of the work himself. **in presence.** "when I am present." All this is what his enemies said of him. **base.** Same word as vii. 6. **bold.** R.V., "of good courage."

2. **may not be bold.** R.V., "shew courage." This word (vers. 1 and 2) is not the same word which follows, ver. 2 and (R.V.) ver. 12. **I think . . . who think.** One of the catchwords in this fierce polemic; see vers. 7, 11. (R.V., "count"; ver. 7, "consider"; ver. 11, "reckon!") **according to the flesh.** At Rom. viii. 4 this phrase means the sinful life; here, Paul at least glides out of that sense into another: "They think us wicked and weak! We are not weak."

3. **in the flesh.** In this mortal bodily life. **after the flesh** (R.V., "according to," as at ver. 2; same Greek). Feebly.

4. **carnal.** R.V., "of the flesh," to bring out the connection with ver. 3, and perhaps also to suggest weakness rather than wickedness; at any rate, that is probably where the emphasis lies in St. Paul's thoughts. **mighty through God.** R.V., "before God,"—*really* mighty? Otherwise:

Divinely mighty: the opposite to weak, or fleshly. **pulling.** "casting." Same word as ver. 5.

5. This verse seems to glance at the conceit of enlightenment—the Apollos party at Corinth?—which very likely had entered into alliance with Judaising slanders and narrowness. No wisdom is of any service in the Christian life if it is not baptized into the gospel by *obedience to Christ*.

6. **when your obedience . . .** This is a sample of the evidence in favour of putting these chapters into the intermediate, angry letter carried by Titus to Corinth. The phrase suggests that all is not well between the church and St. Paul. He will act in the case of the rebels, but only when the silly average man has come to his senses. That, it would seem, cannot yet have happened.

7. **Doye look . . .** This may be (1) a question, as A.V. takes it; or (2) an assertion (R.V.); or again (3) a command. Perhaps the last is best. "Take it your own way! Use your favourite external tests!" **think.** Ver. 2. **of himself.** "with" or "to himself." **is Christ's.** No doubt "after the flesh" (v. 16), by external connection with Jesus and with Palestine and with the Twelve.

8. **boast.** "glory" (R.V.), and so in later verses of the chapter. **more.** "more than in other epistles," or perhaps simply "rather much." **edification.** R.V., "building up," which brings out the antithesis in what follows; also R.V. seems right in rendering "building you up." **your destruction.** "casting you down." The whole phrase recurs (xiii. 10) without the "you." His enemies may have criticised his destructive discipline (especially 1 Cor. v. 1, etc.?). **ashamed.** "put to shame." He has the right to boast.

10. **contemptible.** R.V.'s "of no account" is apparently a borrowing from Bret Harte.

11. **think.** See ver 2. **will we be.** This seems (see xiii. 2) better than R.V.'s "are we." His former visits may have given his enemies some pretext for calling him weak; that is not to happen again!

12. **dare not.** R.V., "are not bold." See on ver. 2. **measuring themselves by themselves.** Having no ideal—no higher standard to check them. **not wise.** R.V., "without understanding."

13. **without.** "beyond." **the measure.** This is the Divinely appointed standard which guides Paul's thought. **(of the) rule.** R.V., "province." The word—"Canon"—sometimes means a measuring rod, sometimes what it measures out. Perhaps both thoughts are in Paul's mind. God's will, indicating a certain field of labour, is decisive for him. While he keeps to that, he is right. If he broke away from that, he should indeed deserve condemnation. **distributed.** R.V., "apportioned." Literally "allotted as our share."

14. **are come.** Literally "came first." Paul was founder (1 Cor. iii. 10); other party leaders—involuntarily made into party leaders—had no such claim on the Corinthians; at the best they merely "watered."

15. **boasting of things without our measure.** This is a hit at the proselytising Judaisers. **by you.** "in you."

16. Paul states the rule of his mission work, Rom. xv. 20, 21. **line.** The word rendered "rule," ver. 13; R.V., "province."

17. From Jer. ix. 23, 24; already quoted in this brief shape, 1 Cor. i. 31 (comp. 1 Cor. iv. 5).

## 2 Cor. xi. 1-15.

## EXPOSURE OF HIS ENEMIES.

Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly :  
2 and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with  
godly jealousy : for I have espoused you to one husband,  
3 that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I  
fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve  
through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted  
4 from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh  
preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or  
if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or  
another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well  
5 bear with him. For I suppose I was not a whit behind  
6 the very chiefest apostles. But though I be rude in speech,  
yet not in knowledge ; but we have been thoroughly made  
7 manifest among you in all things. Have I committed an  
offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because  
8 I have preached to you the gospel of God freely ? I robbed  
other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.  
9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was  
chargeable to no man : for that which was lacking to me the  
brethren which came from Macedonia supplied : and in all  
things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you,  
10 and so will I keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me,  
no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of  
11 Achaia. Wherefore ? because I love you not ? God  
12 knoweth. But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut  
off occasion from them which desire occasion ; that wherein  
13 they glory they may be found even as we. For such are  
false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves  
14 into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel ; for Satan  
15 himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it  
is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the  
ministers of righteousness ; whose end shall be according to  
their works.

There is no avoiding a battle *à outrance*. Two irreconcilable gospels have been preached at Corinth, and Paul's own converts have been rallying to the new teaching, and listening to groundless disparagement passed on him by bad men, who have no heart to rival him in preaching gratuitously; whose end will be like their master the Devil's.

1. **Would to God.** Literally, as R.V., "Would that." a little in my folly. Slightly different reading in R.V., "in a little foolishness." **bear with me.** Imperative mood. Come now, do it! Grammatically the verb might be indicative; but only command (or entreaty) leads up to "For" (ver. 2).

2. Semicolon, not full stop, should be placed at end of the verse. Similarly,

3. **But**—the very light "But"—is more idiomatically rendered "And." This change along with the last makes the train of thought clear. **simplicity.** Good MSS and R.V. add "and the purity." **in Christ.** "toward Christ."

4. **he that cometh.** Paul means the Judaising new-comers. He is describing facts that have actually taken place, though he says **if.** **another Jesus.** After the "flesh"; not comprehended by spiritual faith. This implied a different *spirit* and a different *gospel*—not really spirit and gospel at all (Gal. i. 7), but bondage to law. **ye might well bear.** The assertion is stronger: "You bear it finely." **him.** "It" is better because more general. Another Jesus preached, *and* gospel, *and* spirit.—No pronoun in Greek.

5. **For.** A very difficult transition. The train of thought seems to be—You bear with them, *but*



[the Greek leads us to look for some such addition] not with me [comp. ver. 1 ; and note with Schmiedel how "we have not preached," etc., in ver. 4 has again suggested the topic of Paul's position among them], although I have every right to expect reverence from you. **For** I was a true apostle among you.—Paul's inexpressible sense of personal dignity, and of the wrongs done him, speak in this "for." **suppose.** See on iii. 5. **was not.** Perhaps, "am not." The controversy was still a living, burning one. **the very chiefest apostles.** A strange expression. "The extra special apostles." Usually referred to the Judaisers ; but them he calls false apostles (ver. 13), and surely would hardly twice over—here and at xii. 11—protest his non-inferiority to them. They must have appealed, with however little warrant, to the Twelve. We believe the Twelve are here meant. It was vital to Paul in the interests of his Gentile mission that he should be ranked inferior to no apostle.—Here again (as ver. 2) a semicolon is best.

6. **But though.** "And even though." **rude in speech.** No rhetorician, such as Greeks loved. **knowledge.** In the *substance* of his message.—The end of the verse is better in R.V. : "nay, in everything we have made it manifest among all men to you-ward." **thoroughly** is more literally and also more tellingly rendered "in every thing." **we have been made manifest.** A slight change of the Greek text, with good MSS, gives the harder reading "we have made it," *i.e.* our knowledge, "manifest." **in things.** Must be changed if we have rendered already "in every thing." "Among all men" is equally faithful and much to the point. **among you,** finally, needs to be



changed! and "to you-ward" is actually more literal.

7. **abasing myself.** Acting as if he had no right to support. **exalted.** A rhetorical contrast—for Paul has a good deal of rhetoric at command, and telling rhetoric—to his own "abasement." "Edified" perhaps gives the sense. **freely.** Gratuitously.

8. **robbed.** The word for a soldier, plundering. **other churches.** Perhaps strictly (Phil. iv. 15) one church—the rich and generous church of Philippi. **wages.** The word for a soldier's pay. **to do you service.** "that I might minister unto you." These words (and next verse) suggest that he brought Macedonian money with him to Corinth.

9. **wanted.** Colloquially, "ran short." **chargeable.** R.V. is to be blamed for rendering "a burden." It is a different word from "burdensome" lower down. **the brethren.** Perhaps Silas and Timothy (Acts xviii. 5). **supplied.** Strictly (but could it mean that at ix. 12?) "supplied by a further gift."

10. **boasting** (or "glorying")—in his *disinterestedness*.

11. **love you not?** And so will not accept favours from them? **God knoweth** the truth—how he loves them.

12. It seems best to alter translation and punctuation of both A.V. and R.V. Render: "which desire [an] occasion, that, wherein they glory, they may be found even as we;" the last clause giving, not the motive of Paul's action (in declining money), but the purpose or purport of the Judaisers' desire, to find themselves on a level

with Paul. They won't level down by giving up their salaries; they are too greedy. He won't level up. Thus he "cuts off" their desired occasion of being fully parallel with him.

13. **deceitful workers.** Pretending to be hard at it in the service of the gospel; achieving nothing.

14. **into an angel of light.** Perhaps meant literally. A later Jewish book, the *Apocalypse of Moses*, tells of Satan's performing this change. (As God dwells in light, so good angels are thought of as radiant beings.)

15. Satan's servants accomplish the transformation in the (pseudo) moral region. They make themselves seem good; or perhaps, rather, make themselves seem preachers of justification and salvation.

## 2 Cor. xi. 16-29.

### THE SORROWS OF AN APOSTLE.

16 I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little.  
 17 That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but  
 18 as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. Seeing  
 19 that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. For  
 20 ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise. For  
 ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man  
 devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself,  
 21 if a man smite you on the face. I speak as concerning  
 reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit where-  
 insoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold  
 22 also. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites?  
 so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am  
 23 I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a  
 fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes

above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths  
 24 oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save  
 25 one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned,  
 thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been  
 26 in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in  
 perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in  
 perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the  
 wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false  
 27 brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings  
 often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and  
 28 nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that  
 which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.  
 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and  
 I burn not?

With many apologies, Paul boasts of the numberless sufferings that grew directly out of his apostolate. No one can rival these! Acts is silent on very many of these trials. But for this outburst, we should never have heard of them.

16. **I say again.** Not literally said before, but summing up the spirit of much that has been said. **if otherwise.** "but if ye do." **that I:** "that I also"—as well as the Judaisers! **boast.** "glory" (R.V). So in next verse; making the passage uniform (see ver. 18).

17. **after the Lord (Christ).** In the way a Christian would wish to speak. **boasting.** Ver. 16.

18. **many.** The Judaisers. **after the flesh.** In outward things. Contrasted with "after the Lord," ver. 17.

20. **ye suffer.** You tolerate it. **take of you.** R.V. better, "taketh you captive." The Judaisers treated the Corinthians like their slaves! **smite you.** Metaphorically; but what a strange hint of these gentry's habitual insolence!

21. **I speak**, etc. A difficult sentence. Most authorities take it—I admit, with shame, that I am too weak (to treat you so). A good sense, if a little hard to justify word by word.

23. **as a fool**. “as a madman.” **more**. Perhaps as a sufferer for Christ, in addition to being His servant. **abundant**. R.V., “abundantly,” as in the Greek. **above measure**. “more abundantly.” Same word as in previous clause.

24. **five times**. None of these occasions is recorded elsewhere! **forty stripes** were allowed as a maximum (Deut. xxv. 3). Jewish legal piety characteristically made the number thirty-nine, to keep on the safe side, and then made the maximum penalty the habitual penalty.

25. **Thrice**. Only recorded once, Acts xvi. 22, 23 (and sagely dismissed as an impossible invention—because illegal (Acts xvi. 38, xxii. 25-29) in the case of a Roman citizen—by many radical critics). **rods**. The Roman penalty; the “lictors’” rods: “When the British warrior-queen Bleeding from the Roman rods.” **stoned**. Acts xiv. 19. A Jewish form of execution: Paul was left for dead. **thrice . . . ship-wreck**. No other record. The events of Acts xxvii. happened later. **in the deep**. Possibly in a small boat; more likely on a spar. No other record.

26. **waters**. “rivers.” **in the sea**. Perhaps the above-mentioned shipwrecks; perhaps other dangerous voyages too. **among false brethren**. The most unkindest cut of all. Other trials are natural; but, treachery among Christian *brethren*!

27. **weariness and painfulness**. R.V., “labour and travail,” as at 2 Thess. iii. 8 (A.V.

and R.V.). Same Greek words. **fastings.** vi. 5 and note there.

28. **without.** The "other" things. Not "merely outward" things—the word will not bear that sense. (It has been suggested that, in his excitement, Paul repeats himself, saying "Beside" and then "without" in the same sense.) **that which.** "there is that which."

29. **weak.** Troubled with scruples of conscience. Paul shares these! (1 Cor. ix. 22). **offended.** Tempted; made to "stumble." **burn.** With indignation.

#### 2 Cor. xi. 30–33.

#### GLORYING IN WEAKNESS.

30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which  
31 concern mine infirmities. The God and Father of our  
Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth  
32 that I lie not. In Damascus the governor under Aretas  
the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison,  
33 desirous to apprehend me: and through a window in a  
basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

A new definition. It is his *weakness* he glories in. That began, away back, early in his Christian life, when he had to leave Damascus ridiculously. (And it has never ceased.)

30. **infirmities.** R.V. reads sing. and renders "weakness,"—as uniformly throughout (xii. 5, 9[10]).

31. **which is,** etc. By usage, a description of the Father, not of Christ. **knoweth,** etc. Why this very strong assertion? Bousset connects with ver. 32, and conjectures Paul's enemies had said he ran away that time when in no danger!

32. **Aretas** was king of an Arabian (Nabatean) kingdom. This is our only record of his ever having been lord of Damascus. **kept . . . with a garrison.** "guarded," *i.e.* guarded the gates.

33. See Acts ix. 25. It must have happened after Paul's second stay at Damascus (Gal. i. 17); he could hardly return there soon after such a flight. (Acts does not discriminate between the two stays at Damascus.) And Acts seems to take Paul straight to Jerusalem and then to Tarsus after the flight.

### 2 Cor. xii. 1-10.

#### PAUL EXALTED AND HUMBLLED.

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come  
 2 to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in  
 Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I  
 cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell:  
 God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.  
 3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of  
 4 the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he  
 was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable  
 5 words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such  
 an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in  
 6 mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I  
 shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I  
 forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which  
 7 he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. And lest I  
 should be exalted above measure through the abundance  
 of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the  
 flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be  
 8 exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the  
 9 Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said  
 unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength



is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ  
 10 may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake : for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Close of Paul's self-defence ; recording two events of his inner history, always closely connected in his thoughts—a celestial rapture, when his soul, and, for all he knows, his body too, passed into the immediate presence of God in heaven, and a painful, humbling, almost degrading illness, which burst out again and again. He believes the illness was sent to counterpoise the intoxicating joy of his hour in Paradise. He had prayed hard and often to be relieved, but had had to learn that such was not God's will. Nay, Christ's power was to work through Paul's weakness. It was the price of spiritual strength.—Paul's enemies may have attacked his visions as well as his ill-health. Believing, even at the worst of times, that the Corinthians love him, he now tells them of his supreme vision of God (when he was "caught up"). But he admits that he cannot be judged by such things—only by what men see in him and by the gospel they learn from him. His enemies must often have sneered at his illness ; probably fits, which felled him to the ground as with a blow, and made the great Paul a humiliating spectacle to idle or spiteful curiosity. Satan's work ! they said. Yes, he says ; Satan's work by God's will. Surely they are answered ! We read these verses still with wonder and grief.

1. R.V., with two changes in reading, "I must needs glory, though it is not expedient ; but," etc.

2. **I knew.** "I know." I know of a Christian man who fourteen years ago was caught up, etc. **above.** Needlessly inserted by A.V. **the third heaven.** Here evidently the highest heaven. Some Jewish writings and much Greek science spoke of *seven* heavens (seven planetary spheres?). In O.T. both three and seven are sacred numbers.

3. **I knew.** "I know." **such a man.** Idiomatically equivalent to "that man"; comp. 1 Cor. v. 5.

4. **paradise.** Perhaps conceived as in the third heaven; perhaps beyond it, in a still more sacred region. "Paradise" is a Persian word meaning "Park." It came to be used of the dwelling prepared for the spirits of the holy dead (Luke xxiii. 43), or of the garden of God Himself in glory (Rev. ii. 7); so here. **not lawful.** Better, perhaps, "not possible." Hymns of the angels? Comp. Rom. viii. 26; unutterable desires and prayers of burdened saints upon earth.

Ver. 5 still preserves the assumed contrast between this great visionary and Paul's poor self. **infirmities.** "weaknesses" (for uniformity. "The plural of 'weakness' seems not to have been in use so early as A.V."—*i.e.* 1611).

6. The thin veil drops. He has been speaking of himself! He might indeed boast! It would be truthful! (So, perhaps, R.V., "I shall," *i.e.* I should, "speak the truth." A.V., **I will**, rather suggests "I might boast; *I tell you so frankly.*") **think.** "account." See note on 2 Cor. iii. 5.—Bousset asks if the last phrase is ironical? One hardly thinks so. The expression is inexact: Paul is not really afraid of their overvaluing him! But irony seems out of harmony with this verse. "Lest I should seem to ask men to judge me by such

things,"—that may give the meaning. Compare note at head of paragraph.

7. R.V. inserts "wherefore," — a "difficult" reading, a broken construction. Little change in sense. **abundance.** Rather, "magnitude." **thorn** or "stake" (R.V. margin). It is said that the usage of Greek writers points to "stake" (impalement! torture!), but (Jewish) usage in the LXX (*e.g.* Num. xxxiii. 55) to "thorn" (a smaller but festering sore). **the messenger.** "a messenger" (R.V.). Literally "angel."

8. **For.** "Concerning."

9. **he said.** R.V., "he hath said." Paul had to go back, again and again, to this painful yet infinitely precious message. **strength.** R.V., "power," as in next clause; same Greek word. **infirmities.** See ver. 5.

10. **take pleasure.** A softened and guarded assertion. There will not always be glorying amid afflictions, even in a St. Paul; but always willingness, and peace, and inward pleasure in God's will. **reproaches.** R.V., "injuries." ("The Greek properly means injury accompanied by insult.")

## 2 Cor. xii. 11-18.

### REASONS FOR HIS BOASTING.

- 11 I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I  
12 be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and  
13 mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burden-

14 some to you? forgive me this wrong. Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not your's, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the  
 15 parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love  
 16 you, the less I be loved. But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.  
 17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent  
 18 unto you? I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps?

Paul has played the fool after all, but it was necessary; Corinthian disloyalty had made self-defence unavoidable. And yet he had done all the miracles of an apostle among them. The one grievance was, his not taking pay. His enemies must have insinuated—probably in reference to “the collection”—that he was secretly feathering his own nest. He reminds them how Titus and some other highly honoured Christian “brother” had attended to that matter; had *these* been in a conspiracy with him?

11. **a fool.** xi. 16-19, xii. 6. **am I.** “was I”; referring to his work among them (next verse). **the very chiefest apostles.** xi. 5.

12. **signs of an apostle.** The wonderful ways of life which distinguished an apostle of Christ; especially **signs and wonders and mighty deeds**—miracles of different types; see 2 Thess. ii. 9. (“Signs” the second time in a more limited and special sense.)

13. **other.** “the other.” **forgive me,** etc. Highly ironical.

14. **I am ready.** There is no hint in the

words that he had not actually paid two visits; and xiii. 1 plainly says he had. **I will not.** Even on this third visit. **your's.** What you have: your cash. **you.** Your souls; yourselves. **the parents.** He is their father in Christ (1 Cor. iv. 15).

15. **spend.** My few savings. **be spent.** Use up my little remaining strength. **though.** Best MSS and R.V., "If." Nor is it easy, even if we read "though," to justify A.V.'s translation. It is a question: "If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less?" **more.** "More" than other churches, in sparing their pockets? This is Bousset's suggestion. But surely it was not because he loved Philippi *less* that Paul accepted gifts from there! "More" than other fathers love? (Massie). Perhaps simply "more and more, as time goes on."

17. **make a gain.** Cheat, swindle. The same root as the word for "covetousness."

18. **Titus.** An earlier visit, of course, than that announced viii. 6, 17. **a brother.** "the brother,"—the same provokingly allusive manner that we met with in regard to the later embassy, viii. 18 and viii. 22. **spirit.** It is often hard to know whether this word means the human spirit in a Christian man, Divinely touched, or the Divine Spirit dwelling in him. A.V.—or its ordinary copies—takes the first view. And it has much to say for itself: if the Spirit of God is meant here, we might have expected "Holy Spirit." R.V., however, prints with a capital, implying the second view. Little difference ultimately in the meaning.

2 Cor. xii. 19-xiii. 10.

THREATENINGS AND PLEADINGS.

19 Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we  
 speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly  
 20 beloved, for your edifying. For I fear, lest, when I come,  
 I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be  
 found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates,  
 envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings,  
 21 tumults: and lest, when I come again, my God will humble  
 me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have  
 sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and  
 fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

xiii. 1 This is the third time I am coming to you. In the  
 mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be  
 2 established. I told you before, and foretell you, as if I  
 were present, the second time; and being absent now  
 I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all  
 other, that, if I come again, I will not spare: since ye  
 3 seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward  
 4 is not weak, but is mighty in you. For though he was  
 crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power  
 of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live  
 5 with him by the power of God toward you. Examine  
 yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own  
 selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus  
 6 Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? But I trust  
 7 that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. Now I  
 pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear  
 approved, but that ye should do that which is honest,  
 8 though we be as reprobates. For we can do nothing  
 9 against the truth, but for the truth. For we are glad,  
 when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we  
 10 wish, even your perfection. Therefore I write these things  
 being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness,



according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

Paul is not on the defensive before them; only before God. *They* are under judgment, and if on his next visit he finds things as bad as he fears, they will be under punishment too. That will teach them, finally, whether he is an apostle or not! But he hopes it will not come to that. Let him remain unvindicated (with this dramatic vindication) so long as things go well with them and with the gospel. Even in these seemingly severe chapters, he has been seeking their good and the avoidance of more painful measures. In all measures he seeks their salvation.

19. **Again.** R.V., with a small change in the Greek, "all this time." If we accept that reading, it is better to take the sentence as an assertion, not a question: "Ye think." **we excuse.** We "are defending" ourselves—the technical expression for a defendant's "answer" (1 Cor. ix. 3) in a lawsuit (literally, his "apology," but not in our sense of the word. More nearly as we say "apologetics"). **before God.** God is Paul's judge. **in Christ.** "Christ is prompting me" (Massie). He speaks as Christ teaches. **for your edifying.** Though you are not my judges, it is most true that all I say is said on your account—for your salvation!

20. **debates, envyings.** R.V. reads these words in the singular, and renders "strife, jealousy." **strifes.** R.V., "factions." **whisperings.** Half-muffled discontent, breaking out into swellings and tumults.

21. **again** goes best with **humble me.** He had been "humbled" at his second visit (xiii. 2).

(have sinned) already. R.V., "heretofore." See xii. 2. Men who had lived in gross sin before conversion (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10). **and have not repented** ("and repented not"). Never truly, or never long, laid aside that evil life.

xiii. 1. **the third time.** See xii. 14. But he speaks now in a different connection. Almost whimsically he quotes Deut. xix. 15. Three visits of Paul, three witnesses; they shall be conclusively found guilty!

2. **before.** R.V., "beforehand." **foretell you.** Same word, in a different tense. "And I [now] *tell* you in advance." Continue with R.V., "as when I was present the second time, so now being absent." **I write** is omitted in the best MSS. And here, as at xii. 15, even if we accepted A.V.'s reading we could hardly justify its rendering (though retained in R.V. margin). **Heretofore.** Same word as at xii. 21. **other.** Old English for "others." More exactly, as R.V., "the rest." Those who had sinned since his last visit? (Massie). Those who had sinned in other ways? (Bousset). Or perhaps, the whole discontented section of the church, who had been shielding the offenders.

3. **ye seek.** Practically, this was what their behaviour implied. **a proof.** Proof that he really was in Christ's service. His severe sentences, which they would find themselves unable to resist, would be proof (or *test*) enough of that. **to you-ward.** They, of course, had plenty of Christ's presence and power!

4. **weakness.** One of the offences given by St. Paul to Corinthian prejudice is really one resemblance to his Master; one element of mystic fellowship. Christ died in weakness—Paul is weak.

Christ lives in Divine glory—that power will work through Paul.

5. **Examine.** See 1 Cor. xi. 28. **prove.** Or “test.” *They* are on trial! And not St. Paul (xii. 19). **your own selves.** “as to your own selves.” **Christ is in you.** With His tremendous demand of moral purity. **reprobates.** R.V., “reprobate.” The word is an adjective rather than a noun. And so next verse.

6. **not reprobates** (ver. 5). If he *must* punish, he is glad to know it will be a proof to them that Christ is with him.

7. **Now.** “But.” Rather than this conclusive test should be given them—better far, may *they* do what is right! **as reprobates.** This is almost a play upon the word. The meaning “reprobate” still lingers in the writer’s mind and in the readers’; but the precise meaning here is “untested,” “unvindicated.”

8. **the truth.** The gospel, and the salvation it yields. Men’s salvation before all things!

9. **this also we wish.** “pray for,” and “also” goes with the verb. His preference, nay his *prayer to God*, is that they may sincerely repent, and advance to Christian perfection (whatever becomes of Paul’s reputation!). **perfection.** “perfecting.”

10. **power.** “authority.” **edification . . .** **destruction.** See on x. 8.

2 Cor. xiii. 11–14.

### LAST MESSAGES AND BENEDICTION.

11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the

- 12 God of love and peace shall be with you. Greet one  
 13 another with an holy kiss. All the saints salute you.  
 14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,  
 and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you  
 all. Amen.

The second epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, a city of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas.

Perhaps not originally following on chaps. x.-xiii. (Intro. p. 31).

11. **farewell.** Or "rejoice" (at least, if this was written as the conclusion of the more cordial and happy chapters, i.-ix.). Compare the rendering of the same word 1 Thess. v. 16; Phil. iii. 1, iv. 4.  
**perfect.** "perfected." of good comfort.  
 "comforted."

12. **an holy kiss.** See on 1 Thess. v. 26.

13. **All the saints.** All the Christians (see on 1 Thess. iii. 13) on the spot where Paul wrote.

14. This is the fullest benediction in any epistle, and therefore the one most largely in use among ourselves at the close of public worship. Christ's grace, God's love, the Holy Spirit's communion with us—this threefold wish sums up the Christian salvation. **Amen.** Omitted once more in R.V. text.

Postscript in A.V. It is quite possible that this epistle—or chaps. i.-ix. and the closing verses of xiii.—was written from Philippi; and certainly Titus carried it (chap. viii.). It is even conceivable that one of the unnamed "brethren" of chap. viii. (18, 22) may have been Luke. But these postscripts, of course, have no authority.



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*References where the word indexed does not occur, though the subject does—or where the word is only found in N.T. text—are bracketed, thus ( ). But readers must not expect every textual reference to be included, as in a Concordance.*

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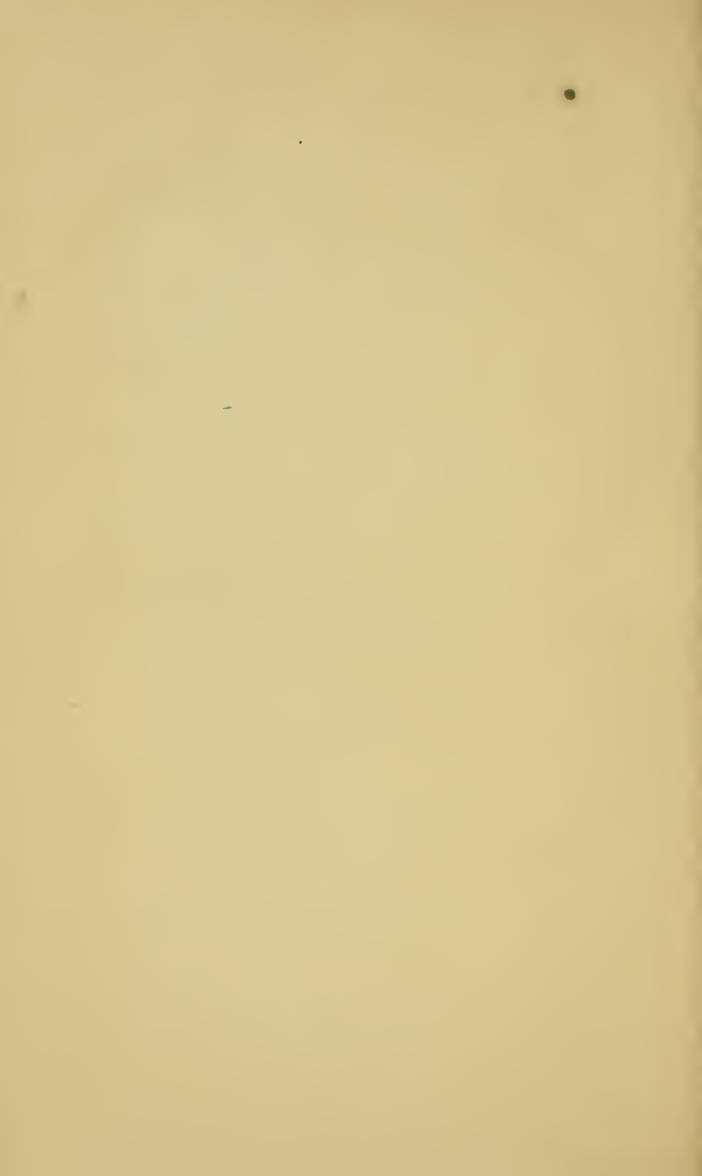


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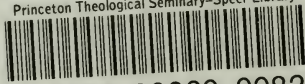
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